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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League 'Denounces' Israeli Shelling of Lebanon

NC2402192596 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab League today denounced Israel's bombardment of south Lebanon and the western al-Biqa'. It said these hostile acts are inconsistent with the spirit of peace currently prevailing in the region.

In a statement issued today, the League asked the two countries sponsoring the peace process, especially the United States, to put maximum pressure on Israel to make it stop its recurring attacks on south Lebanon and the western al-Biqa' and expedite the implementation of Security Council Resolution 425. The resolution calls for Israel's complete and unconditional withdrawal from all occupied Lebanese territories.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Jericho VOP Reports Jerusalem Bus Explosion, Closure

JN2502065196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The latest casualty toll in the Israeli bus explosion in the center of Jerusalem reached 15 dead and 30 injured.

The explosion occurred today in a passenger bus belonging to the Egged Bus Company in the center of Jerusalem. Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres will hold a special session with senior Israeli security officials today to evaluate the situation.

The Israeli occupation authorities today imposed a military closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip until further notice.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Quds Radio Hails 'Heroic' Jerusalem, Ashqelon Bombings

JN2502092296 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1833 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian uprising this morning shook the Zionist settler existence on the Arab territory of Palestine on the anniversary of the [Hebron] holy Ibrahimi Mosque massacre and as a challenge to the Zionist arrogance and oppressive military machine and the plots that are being hatched against our Palestinian Arab people.

The first martyrdom-seeking operation occurred at 0645 today at the entrance of Yafo Street in Jerusalem. The attack targeted a doubledecker bus belonging to the Zionist Egged Bus Company resulting in splitting it in two and completely burning it. The fragments of dead Zionists were scattered dozens of meters away. We have also learned that another bus, which was behind the target bus, was also hit. The latest enemy casualties as reported by the al- Quds radio correspondent is 16 killed and more than 40 injured, seven of them seriously.

The second martyrdom-seeking heroic operation occurred at 0730 this morning near the Ashqelon-Tel Aviv crossing. It targeted a gathering of Zionist soldiers who were waiting to be transferred to the Zionist camps of terror. The latest casualty toll is four soldiers killed and 27 injured, five of them very seriously.

We have received news that the casualty toll of the two heroic operations has risen to 20 Zionists dead and 67 injured, 12 of them seriously. Other reports by the al-Quds radio correspondents say that the death toll of the two attacks has risen to 23 Zionists after three of the enemy injured personnel died in hospital.

The final casualty toll is 23 Killed and 67 injured, 12 seriously.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Condemns Israel Blasts, Extends Condolences

JN2502092996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to the latest casualty toll of today's Jerusalem and Ashqelon blasts, 23 were killed and another 67 were wounded. President Yasir 'Arafat considered the two operations a criminal act targeting the entire peace process and not only civilians. The president extended sincere condolences to the families of the victims and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat, Others React to Blasts, PA Statement

JN2502110996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1000 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat has considered the bombings in Jerusalem and Ashqelon as murderous operations directed against the entire peace process and not only against civilians. 'Arafat extended his condolences to the families of the victims and to Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Perez. More in the following dispatch by 'Adil al-Za'nun:

[Al-Za'nun] President Yasir 'Arafat has considered the bombings in Jerusalem and al-Majdal [Ashqelon] this morning as acts of murder.

In a first reaction to the two attacks, President 'Arafat told reporters when he arrived at the presidency in Gala this morning:

[Begin 'Arafat recording] I consider this an act of murder not only against innocent civilians but against the entire peace process. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. [end recording]

The president denounced the attack and said that this operation will affect the peace process. 'Arafat contacted Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Perez and extended condolences to him. The peace discussions between the Palestinian and Israel sides have been suspended.

Ahmad Quay', head of the Palestinian side to the steering and followup committee, said that the Israeli side informed him of the postponement of the peace talks until further notice.

The Israeli bus attack on Jerusalem's route No. 18 occurred at 0650 this morning resulting in the death of 18 Israelis and the injury of 43 others. The al-Majdal bombing occurred only minutes after the Jerusalem attack resulting in killing three Israelis and injuring 24 others.

The latest casualty toll in the two attacks is 26 dead and 70 injured, five of whom are in critical condition.

As part of the Palestinian reaction, Marwan Kanafani, member of the elected Legislative Council, said that these operations will not help the peace process. He denounced the attacks and described them as murderous acts.

The Israeli authorities imposed military closure on the West Bank and Gaza this morning. Colonel Mamduh al-Buji, the officer in charge of the Palestinian side at the Bat Hanun crossing, said that about 20,000 workers have returned to the Gala Strip and that other workers are now on their way back. He said that 30,000 workers from Gaza left to cross the green line this morning. [End al-Za'nun report]

Thank you, 'Adil. To sum up, the casualty toll in Jerusalem and Ashqelon is 26 dead and about 70 injured. According to the Israeli police sources, 23 killed in Jerusalem and 3 others in Ashqelon.

On the line with us from Gala is Nabil Aba-Rudaynah, President Yasir 'Arafat's adviser:

[Unidentified announcer] What is your reaction to the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations as well as the incident in Gala?

[Abu-Rudaynah] As you know, President Yasir 'Arafat personally denounced these acts. A statement will shortly be issued by the Palestinian National Authority [PNA]. The question is who stands behind these operations and who will benefit from these actions when we are about to receive power in the city of Hebron? Who will benefit from preventing 70,000 workers from going to their work this morning? Why now? Why should we always be placed in a position which harms our people's national interests?

As I told you, Aba-'Ammar ['Arafat] contacted the Israeli prime minister and met with the international media a short while ago. The Palestinian Authority will shortly issue an official statement.

[Correspondent] Then we will be waiting for the statement.

[Abu-Rudaynah] Yes.

[Correspondent] Thank you.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Abbas Condemns Jerusalem, Ashqelon Bombings

JN2502135896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1115 GMT 25 Feb 96

[From a report on reactions to the Jerusalem and Ashqelon bombings within the "With the Midday Events" feature]

[FBIS Translated Text] There are angry reactions on all levels, particularly on the Israeli and Palestinian sides. Our correspondent Yasir 'Atilah telephoned Mahmud 'Abbas, also known as Abu-Mazin, [a senior PLO official] who is currently in Tunisia.

[Begin 'Abbas recording] We heard in the news that there have been two sabotage operations targeting innocent victims in Jerusalem and Ashqelon. These actions—which are carried out by people who have no sense of responsibility and are very far from human ethics—adversely affect the Israeli and Palestinian societies. They harm us in the same degree as they shed the blood of our Israeli neighbors. We categorically condemn such operations, which we believe seek to sabotage the entire peace process and make things return to the past. The Palestinian and Israeli people refuse to go back to the past. On this occasion, we offer our heartfelt condolences to the families of those killed. We wish those who were injured speedy recovery. We hope that these people will not be allowed to achieve their goal of destroying the political process. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas on Reasons for Attacks, Calls For 'Just Peace'

TA2502135796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1325 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Report by Yoni Ben-Menahem in the studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] I am in possession of the leaflet issued by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in which it assumes responsibility for the two bombings in Jerusalem and Ashqelon. The leaflet is signed by the squads of the new disciples of martyr Yahya 'Ayyash, The Engineer. In its headline, the leaflet says: Our revenge for the blood of The Engineer will be more painful than believed by the Israeli leaders. This is the Hamas statement as it appears in the leaflet in which it assumes responsibility for the Jerusalem and Ashqelon attacks carried out to avenge The Engineer's blood 50 days after his death.

The leaflet goes on to emphasize: The attack was designed to strike a blow at those behind the liquidation of 'Ayyash. We will teach the Israeli leaders that Hamas has a strong and solid base for activity anywhere it chooses. Hamas is also telling the world the following: We are neither murderers nor terrorists. Just peace is our goal, too, and if Israel is serious about its peace plan, it should cease its anti-Hamas terror and release all the detainees at once.

Palestinian Affairs: Police Source Says 5 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Members Detained

TA2502143096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian security services have detained five 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam activists in the city of Gaza. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem has learned this from a Palestinian police source.

Palestinian Affairs: Ministry Reacts to Jerusalem, Ashqelon Blasts

JN2502144096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Information said that the bombing operations in Jerusalem and Ashqelon today do not serve efforts to end the Israeli occupation and achieve Palestinian national rights.

The ministry issued a statement today saying that these operations present Israelis with justifications to place more restrictions and obstacles to reinforce the occupation's presence and impose collective punishment. The statement holds the Israeli side responsible for creating a suitable climate to renew the circle of violence. The statement reminds that calmness, stability, and coexistence are always linked to achieving practical steps toward peace and will not be linked whatsoever to security measures.

In its statement, the Ministry of Information strongly regrets the fall of victims and demands an end to violence and bloodshed.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Full' Text of 'Yahya 'Ayyash Units' Statement on Attacks

TA2502150696 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 1310 GMT 25 Feb 96

["Full translation" of the Hamas leaflet "declaring responsibility" for the 25 February bombing operations in Ashqelon and Jerusalem, entitled: "Our response to the blood of the Engineer will be stronger than imagined by Israel's leaders"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] To our hearty Palestinian masses:

The Yahya 'Ayyash Units declare responsibility for the two explosive operations this morning in the heart of occupied Jerusalem and in Ashqelon.

Our attacks led to the death and injury of more than 100 Israeli soldiers and settlers and destroyed a number of enemy vehicles. The attacks were carried out in loyalty to the Engineer who fell 50 days ago, with his blood seeping into the land of Palestine.

What we want to say:

First: This morning's attacks are an intelligence and military victory for the Engineer's Units. We consider it a strike at those who stood behind the decision to exterminate the Engineer.

Second: Our Units will respond harshly to anyone who harms our fighters and wanted heroes. The leaders of Israel should know that we have a strong core and organization allowing us to work whenever we want wherever we want.

Third: We tell the world that we are not killers or terrorists. Just and honorable peace is a noble pursuit for us. If the government of Israel is serious in its peace project it should stop its terrorism against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and release our prisoners immediately. Then we will adopt a historic position where we will be the party most keen on not having one drop of blood shed in the Land of Palestine.

To our masses: We congratulate the Engineer Abu-Bara' (Yahya 'Ayyash), his wife, sons, parents, relatives and the half-million who marched in the funeral of the martyr of the Palestinian nation. We vow to this nation to remain loyal to our pure Palestinian blood and to be mighty in facing the occupier enemy.

This is jihad, victory or martyrdom.

[Signed] Yahya 'Ayyash Units, New Generation

[Dated] Palestine, 25 February 1996

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Tibi—Attacks Change Picture of Talks With Islamists

TA2502163996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1500 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Interview with Ahmad al-Tibi, adviser to Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, in the Jerusalem studio by 'Anat Tal-Shir in the Tel Aviv studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Tal-Shir] Good day to you, Ahmad al-Tibi. In your opinion, does the Palestinian Authority [PA] do enough to prevent such attacks? These people have names and addresses, and they can be reached.

[Al-Tibi] The PA is doing its best to prevent attacks. It succeeded in the past — there is clear evidence of this; the Israeli Government knows this — in thwarting attacks such as the two horrendous ones that took place today. It is making a supreme effort to prevent these incidents. It does not have a recipe for 100-percent success. When such a horrible incident does take place, it is always said that more should be done, and I agree that results point to this. Nonetheless, at least five certain, horrible incidents were prevented this past year thanks to the PA's activity.

[Tal-Shir] You are saying that the PA is sufficiently active in the sphere of prevention. What, in fact, is it doing?

[Al-Tibi] I am not a political adviser. I am not aware of all the minute details. I know the results. I am familiar with the general guidelines and instructions which the chairman and the PA mete out to the Palestinian Police and the security services. Results in the area this past year are self-evident, despite today's horrible attacks. Let me repeat: When such incidents take place, questions are asked, and rightly so. There are joint Israeli- Palestinian committees. I think both sides should continue to step up the level of cooperation in all spheres in order to further promote the peace process and frustrate the activity of those who are trying to foil the process.

[Tal-Shir] Can you, Dr. al-Tibi, tell us of progress in the talks between the PA and the Islamic groups in the Gaza Strip?

[Al-Tibi] I do not know who stands behind today's incidents specifically, but it is difficult to speak of progress today. There were direct talks recently between PA and Islamic opposition representatives. These talks made good progress, and certain points were consolidated; however, no final agreement has been reached or signed. Today's attacks change the picture.

[Tal-Shir] Thank you, Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi.

Palestinian Affairs: Radio Condemns Jerusalem, Ashqelon Incidents

JN2502165196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1013 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The West Jerusalem incident, which was aimed at killing and wounding Israelis, and the al-Majdal [Ashqelon] incident, which was directed at Palestinian workers on their way to Gaza, are criminal terrorist acts which are rejected and condemned by both Palestinians and Israelis. They are also rejected and condemned by all peace lovers among Israelis and Palestinians, just as are all other past terrorist acts against innocent civilians among both Palestinians and Israelis since the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements.

The Palestinian Authority, represented by its chairman President Yasir 'Arafat, condemned today's West Jerusalem and Ashqelon incidents and offered warm condolences to the families of the dead and wounded out of its awareness that the prevalent language now is that of peace on this land—Israel and Palestine—and that the prevalent climate is that of peace—just and lasting peace, which is based on the right of both Palestinians and Israelis to life and self-determination within two neighborly states away from the environment of hatred, enmity, and sabotage.

Since the day on which the Palestinian and Israeli sides recognized one another, extremists from both sides have tried to sabotage the peace process by provoking acts of violence against civilians, deliberately murdering innocent people, fanning the lust for settlement, or making vitriolic statements threatening to torpedo the peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Those operating in the dark may succeed in bruising the peace process once, twice, or even ten times, and those who seek to keep the Palestinian people captive to the past and the life of misery and depression may succeed in stopping the wheel of reconstruction, progress, and new life once, twice, or even ten times. But, these people, who are the real corresponding party to Israeli extremists who seek to torpedo the peace process, will not continue forever to impose their sabotage and dark life style on the Palestinians, who truly hope to keep the peace process alive, continuous, and as a strategic option in their life in order to achieve their national rights and elevate the edifice of their Palestine state alongside their Israeli neighbors despite all the winds of settlement that loom on the horizon and the repeated assertion that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel only.

Peace is the civilized, humane ideal of the peoples of the region and the world today. With peace we will build all our institutions. With peace we will remove the specter of fear and hunger which threaten our Palestinian people. On this basis, and depending on the consciousness of our Palestinian people, who voted for peace in their presidential elections and also in the recent legislative elections, we say that terrorist and sabotage acts, such as the ones which took place in Jerusalem and Ashqelon and directed at Israeli civilians, are condemned and denounced savage acts, just as are all sabotage and terrorist acts which are directed at Palestinian civilians.

Our national authority, which is leading our people to the bank of peace and with the backing of its Palestinian people, who have chosen and voted for and said yes to peace, will not remain with their hands tied against whoever tries to tamper with our strategic option, which is the achievement of peace.

We join the Palestinian Authority in offering our condolences to the families of the Israeli and Palestinian dead and wounded in the sabotage incidents which took place on this bloody day. Our wager is that the cause of peace shall triumph not only on this land, but also in the entire region.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP, DFLP, Fatah Dissidents Praise Bombings in Israel

NC2502171496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Reactions to the Jerusalem and Ashqelon bombings have not been uniformly critical. Mahir al-Tahir, an official of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], stated that the two bombings are heroic acts. Dawud Talhami, spokesman for the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], said that Israel bears responsibility for this violence.

Hizballah meanwhile extolled the two attacks. Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Na'im Qasim declared: We praise the Palestinian youths for this operation. Israel will enjoy no security, regardless of any measures it takes.

A spokesman for Fatah, the Uprising praised the two attacks and said that armed struggle must continue until all the occupied Palestinian territories are liberated.

Palestinian Affairs: Quray' Condemns Israel Bombings, Decries Israeli Aggression

NC2502191596 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] MBC has interviewed Ahmad Quray', member of the Palestinian Council, who expressed the hope that the two bombings will not have any adverse effect on the ongoing negotiations with Israel.

[Begin Quray' recording] Violence only leads to further violence. Aggression can never stop the violence until the aggression itself stops. I am sorry to say that the violence still goes on. We are committed to fighting it. Meanwhile there is sweeping Israeli aggression, as illustrated by the expansion of the settlements, the building of auxiliary roads, and so on. I do not want to compare this with that on this occasion, although I condemn this incident in line with the Palestinian position on it. Such operations have a negative effect on the peace process, the Palestinian people, and overriding Palestinian national interests. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Member Criticizes 'Arafat's Denunciation of Bombings

NC2502194496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Interview with Abu-Hamdan, official in charge of the Islamic Resistance Movement office in Tehran, by unidentified correspondent on 25 February; place not given; from the "News and Reports" Program—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Perhaps you heard the news that 'Arafat has denounced these two heroic operations [the Ashqelon and Jerusalem bombings in Israel on 25 February]. He described them as terrorist acts. Also some officials in other Arab countries have denounced these acts and offered condolences to the Zionists. 'Arafat's attitude could be explained because he is in accord with the Zionist line. But how do you view the others' behavior?

[Abu-Hamdan] Actually I would like to say something about those who offer condolences to the Zionist entity. I would like to ask where they were when martyr Fathi al-Shaqaqi, martyr Yahya 'Ayyash, and former martyrs were killed. Where were they when several senior leaders, members, and ordinary citizens of our people were liquidated. We heard no voices of condemnation or condolences then.

We believe that the martyrs join God. Whether condolences have been offered or not does not decrease their value, martyrdom, and their association with people. This was demonstrated by the people during the quarter-million march which took place during martyr Yahya 'Ayyash's funeral.

However, we ask why they rush to offer condolences for the occupation solders' deaths even though they know there is an occupation; and why do they disregard the occupation's crimes? It is one of two things. Either the equation is no longer understandable to them, in which case we ask them to reread the facts and understand this equation. Or perhaps there are commitments and pressures compelling them to do so. At least they should think a little before condemning this heroic act. We believe that history has proved that the occupation is doomed to end and that nations under occupation cannot forget the stands of others—whether they stood by them or against them and whether they denounced or supported their struggle.

These nations cannot forget. We do not say that these nations will call them to account, but at least their memories will be bitter of those who denounced this heroic act. These nations will also have a positive memory and a sense of gratitude toward those who at least voiced support for them even if only over the radio or through other media and even if this support was not put into action.

I say that everyone must understand the true struggle of our nation against the occupation, that the occupation still persists, and that our people are suffering from it. They must also understand that the occupation's deceptions through 'Arafat or the so-called self-rule, self-rule elections, and so forth will not fool our people in the occupied territories. We also hope these deceptive acts will not fool the others living outside the territories.

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th Hopes Operation Will Not Hamper Peace Process

JN2502204496 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1815 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, PA minister of planning and international cooperation, by 'Adnan al-Zu'bi in Amman—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Zu'bi] Dear viewers, we have in the studio Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation in the Palestinian National Authority [PNA; Palestinian Authority, PA]. Good evening, Dr. Nabil.

[Sha'th] Good evening to you.

[Al-Zu'bi] The Israelis, that is Shim'on Peres today said that the Palestinians are cooperating to prevent terrorist incidents in the area, but that this is not enough, and that they should do more. How do you view this statement and what is the Palestinian Authority's reply to this?

[Sha'th] Of course, feelings in Israel are inflamed today. We are at the beginning of an election campaign. There is no doubt that much pressure is being brought to bear on the Israeli cabinet and the prime minister. We, of course, forcefully condemned this operation....

[Al-Zu'bi, interrupting] President Yasir 'Arafat also condemned the operation.

[Sha'th] Yes. But the fact remains that the Palestinian National Authority has done all that it can to stop these bloody operations with all means, resorting to security means, pressure, the arrest of planners, and ongoing dialogue with the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement, and the Islamic Jihad Movement. These means, taken together, have succeeded in practically stopping these operations for seven months. We are now speaking of the first operation since the last operation at Ramat Gan. There is a genuine feeling that these operations undermine the peace process, destroy the Palestinian future, and that we have to stop them with all means. Until today's operation, we were really successful in doing this. This operation is in the heart of Jerusalem and not in the National Authority's area. Therefore, one should not distinguish between the responsibility we and Israel assume with respect to this operation. But, there is no doubt that we will do all that is possible as this is the road to the future. Halting violence is the road to peace, and not only our human feelings to what has happened are needed but also our political sentiments to build a real future.

[Al-Zu'bi] Dr. Nabil, we will come back to you. Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi, Palestinian Legislative Council member, are you ready? [passage omitted]

[Al-Zu'bi] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, I heard from Israeli sources that Israel suspended the negotiations, particularly the redeployment in Hebron. But, later on, it was said that this will be for a limited period of time, the time of mourning.

[Sha'th] I do not believe we will be confronted with the suspension of the peace process. What we heard from the Israeli officials is that they are determined to pursue the peace process in spite of what has taken place. We, also have faced many acts of violence from the Israeli side. In spite of this, we decided to pursue the peace process. There is no substitute to the peace process. It is true that these operations undermine the peace process, irrespective of the party which carries them out; operations against Palestinians or against Israelis. We should overcome all this and pursue the peace process because there will be a state of affairs which will make it impossible for any of the parties to carry out the same thing again.

[Al-Zu'bi] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, the Palestinian and Israeli sides are in agreement that such operations should make all move toward peace?

[Sha'th] There is no doubt about this. I hope that this closure which was imposed before this operation will not last. The closure also harms the peace process and we should be able to pursue this process to build our future together.

Palestinian Affairs: Cabinet Condemns Blasts, Criticizes Israeli Measures

JN2502210296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Statement issued by the PA Council of Ministers on 25 February]

[FBIS Translated Text] The two terrorist operations, which were carried out against Israeli civilians in Jerusalem and Ashqelon this morning, shocked the National Authority and the Palestinian people. The Council of Ministers of the authority strongly condemns these two terrorist operations in Jerusalem and Ashqelon against Israeli civilians and extends its heartfelt condolences to the Israeli Government and the families of the victims.

The Palestinian Council of Ministers asserts that the aim of the perpetrators of these terrorist operations is to deal a blow to the peace process and serve the extremist Palestinian and Israeli forces, whose positions and projects have been weakened by the noticeable progress made by the Palestinian people in the peace process.

The Council of Ministers recalls that Avishay Raviv, leader of the Eyal movement that assassinated Rabin, had made statements that the movement held secret meetings with Palestinian extremists. This exposes the dimensions of these terrorist operations in terms of preparation, the nature of materials used in them, and the assistance extended to carry them out.

The Council of Ministers of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA; Palestinian Authority, PA] condemns these terrorist operations and asserts to the Palestinian people that the aim of these operations is to strike at the interests of the Palestinian people on all the political and economic levels and to create more burdens for our Palestinian people, who struggle along with their authority to achieve our national goals of liberation and independence.

Therefore, halting the negotiations, closing the West Bank and Gaza Strip, stopping trade activity, blocking the exporting of the Palestinian agricultural and industrial products, and preventing workers from acquiring their living will cause a severe damage to the national situation and the higher vital interests of the Palestinian people.

The Council of ministers of the PNA has decided to take the necessary measures and urges the Palestinian citizens to be alert and cautious.

Palestinian Affairs: Fatah Dissident Leader Defends Israel Bombings

NC2602073696 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] In a statement to our radio, Fatah-the Uprising Leader Colonel Abu-Musa [Sa'id Muragha] said the two attacks are part of the martyrdom-seeking operations launched by the Palestinian people. He said the enemy must know that none of its political agreements with Yasir 'Arafat represent the Palestinian people. He said:

[Begin Muragha recording] These operations are part of the martyrdom- seeking attacks carried out by our Palestinian people as their militant, jihad, and self-defense right and duty. The Zionist enemy must know that none of its political agreements with traitor 'Arafat represent the Palestinian people or their will. It is our duty as Arabs and Muslims to retaliate against Zionist aggressions. The latest of such aggressions were the attacks against south Lebanon a few days ago, the assassination of militant Engineer Yahya 'Ayyash in Gaza a month ago, and before that the assassination of martyr Fathi al-Shaqaqi. Why should they have the right to attack our leaders, cadres, people, and land while we are deprived of this right? We tell the traitors, 'Arafat and his corrupt clique, that our Palestinian people will always retaliate, and will continue their struggle. Israel can only expect further martyrdom-seeking operations, God willing. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Ambassador in Amman Condemns Jerusalem, Ashqelon Blasts

JN2602075396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Umar al-Khatib, Palestinian Ambassador and representative of the Palestinian Authority [PA] and the PLO in Amman, strongly condemned the Jerusalem and Ashqelon operations.

Al-Khatib said the enemies of the peace process seek all possible means to harm and block this process by carrying out inhumane acts that victimize innocent people from both sides. He stressed that these actions and the people behind them will only increase our determination and resolve to press ahead with the peace process.

The Palestinian official conveyed his condolences, as well as those of the Palestinian Embassy staff in Amman, to the families of the victims and to the Israeli Government.

Palestinian Affairs: Police Arrest Hamas, Islamic Jihad Activists

TA2602074396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Police have so far arrested approximately 20 Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists in the Gaza Strip, but only several of them are active in the movement's military arm. Security sources in Israel believe that in the wake of his victory in the elections, 'Arafat can exert greater pressure on Hamas in a bid to put an end to the attacks.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0730 GMT on 26 February adds: "The Palestinian security forces last night detained 30 activists in the Hamas and Islamic Jihad military arms. This was reported by Palestinian sources to our correspondent Hanan Schlein. They added that the Palestinian security forces are setting up roadblocks on Gaza Strip roads and are checking vehicles following yesterday's attacks."]

Algeria

Algeria: FIS Sees Dissidents' Meeting Plans as 'Conspiracy'

MM2302160196 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 23 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by Salah Jamil: "Salvation Front Says: Turkey Meeting 'Nonsense' Fabricated by Algerian Regime"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London — The Algerian Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] has described as "nonsense" the meeting that FIS dissidents reportedly intend to hold next week, most likely in Turkey, to form an alternative leadership to the current leadership of the outlawed Front, which is deprived of the means of communication as a result of the continued detention of its leaders in Algeria. Djafar Houari, member of the FIS Executive Committee, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the meeting to which Benazzouz Zebda, a founder of the FIS who was dismissed from the leadership at the Batna conference in July 1991, has invited a number of former FIS shura council members and candidates who won in the first round of elections canceled in 1992 is "another chapter in the conspiracy being hatched by the regime for the FIS." Houari stressed that the initiative by Zebda, who works in trade in Turkey, is an extension of similar appeals made by Ahmed Merani, who is in charge of the religious affairs portfolio in the government of Ahmed Ouyahia, and Othman Aissani, both of whom were FIS founder members but broke away.

Algeria: UGTA Leader Threatens 'Total Paralysis' if Wage Cuts Remain

LD2402175696 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Algeria, the head of the powerful UGTA [General Union of Algerian Workers] trade union federation is now threatening the ruling authorities with a total paralysis of the country unless the government cancels its measure of salary deductions [from paid workers to compensate unpaid workers]. In an interview with the LE MATIN daily newspaper, [UGTA Secretary General] Abdelhak Benhamouda says everything will be decided today, the anniversary of the UGTA's creation. The secretary general of the trade union federation is in fact due to make a speech today in Arzew, in the west of the country,to representatives of the oil industry.

Algeria: Zeroual on Political, Economic Situation

LD2402234496 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1938 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Address by Algerian President Liamine Zeroual at a rally in Oran on 24 February marking the 40th anniversary of the founding of the General Union of Algerian Workers, UGTA, and the 25th anniversary of the nationalization of energy resources — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate, and prayers be upon the most honorable of messengers. My brother and sister workers: I have the pleasure of being among you again this year to express the unity of the Algerian people's sentiment in marking the anniversary of the historic 24th February and the sacrifices and commitments it embodies. [passage omitted]

My brother and sister workers: I have said that the marking of the anniversary is always an occasion for returning to the origins, and that the 24th February anniversary is full of symbols and lessons which have to be considered objectively and sincerely. Indeed, today we are marking first of all the 40th anniversary of the founding of the UGTA. The UGTA has contributed with devotion in writing this glorious page of our history; the history of the glorious November revolution. [passage omitted]

The UGTA, born during the struggle for liberation, is still facing a struggle that is equally noble and pressing. It is the struggle to prop up Algeria and to build this homeland with the participation of all its sons, without any exclusion.

My brothers and sisters: This struggle dictates that we must first of all mobilize ourselves and support our values — the values of mobilization, efforts and sacrifices — against deviations, for which we are all paying a high price now.

Amidst the struggle to build the homeland, the second anniversary we are marking today [nationalization of energy resources] is rich with signs. It is the 25th anniversary of regaining our national sovereignty over Algeria's hydrocarbon resources [applause]. [passage omitted]

Brother workers, men and women: For four years the Algerian workers have been at the heart of the national leap forward that has put an end to a dangerous deviation which was laying Algeria open to dire dangers. This leap forward has required that differences and disputes be transcended in response to the call of national duty, and it has brought together all the national forces, thus blocking the road to the attempt to destroy this homeland. This leap forward has also turned into a corrective track by permitting a start in serious action to recover the prestige of the Algerian state so as to engage in an action of deep economic reforms at a time when, as you know, the country was on the brink of coming to a halt in the repayment of its foreign debt, and so as to give priority to the sovereign will of the nation over the political paralysis which has beset the country for several years. This leap forward and this corrective action already initiated have enabled the Algerian nation to secure the victory of 17 November last year [presidential elections]. Victories are likely to arouse rancor and cause backstage maneuvers, but they also give rise to very great hopes and aspirations. However, it is inevitable that real victories are, first and foremost, a beginning and an insistent call for an increasing collective effort. The 17 November national victory cannot escape this inevitability, otherwise it will be exposed to danger and disappearance.

To sum it up, brothers and sisters, the victory of the will of the people has aroused rancor that is still seen through cowardly and criminal acts perpetrated indiscriminately among the Algerian people. These acts are doomed to definitive failure because they are confronted by the firm determination of the state. Likewise, these acts will be absorbed, all the more since the Algerian nation, which is united in rejecting crimes and is strong with its vigilance and its farsightedness, will be able to confront these acts with its determined will and firm commitment to definitively get out of this ordeal.

The victory of the national will has also caused backstage maneuvers. This is not surprising and this attempt will also fail, God willing, and thanks to the efforts of all the Algerians.

Brothers and sisters: Contrary to what is being rumored in tendentious circles both inside and outside the country, the state is determined to further take responsible initiatives to present them to all the national forces with the aim of completing the real democratic process which is the right of the Algerian people alone. At the same time, with its dynamic forces at the forefront, including the workers' community, all the Algerian people must remain farsighted and vigilant in the face of the falsification of realities, perfidious maneuvers, and prejudice.

As I have said, the national victory scored on 16 November last has fed great and legitimate hopes and aspirations, but, brothers and sisters, some people are trying to abort this national victory for narrow political aims, continue to mislead the people and extinguish any glimmer of hope before it. It is these factors that today make me reaffirm to you that the positive results of 16 November are not an objective in themselves, but an effective starting point. The date of 16 November was a call for an increasing effort, continuous mobilization, and shared sacrifices. We should all heed this call, brothers and sisters, in order to realize all the security, stability, and prosperity that our people aspires for.

If the national leap forward has changed into a corrective movement that has already began, it is because its features are realism, transparency, and devotion in serving this dear homeland.

My brothers and sisters: When I turned to workers in Hassi Messaoud last year, I addressed you in the language of realism and openness. [passage omitted]

My brother and sister workers: Some people are still presenting our resort to rescheduling [of debts] and restructuring as wrong decisions. The question is do those people want us to forget the state of our economy in April 1994, or do they want to cover up the mistakes which led Algeria to this painful state of affairs? Do they want to forget that, facing a pressing call by state officials, no one, and I repeat no one, put forward an alternative to the decisions made. My brothers and sisters: Therefore, all these questions must not be forgotten when making an analysis based on pessimistic criticism aimed at destroying the Algerian people's hope.

In the same way, some people are still seeking to denounce the track of reforms that the national economy cannot escape, otherwise it would jeopardize its genuine chances of achieving permanent revival. Today, I say to all the nation, without exception: is it still necessary for a reminder that rescheduling is nothing but a temporary delay for the duties imposed by our heavy foreign debt, and is it still necessary for a reminder, despite the regrettable past experiences, that resorting to borrowing money is not a solution or a lasting possibility? Therefore, Algeria must make available the necessary means of paying its debt and protect its growth. This implies a growing economic output and a bigger production of wealth. This is the collective duty requiring from us efforts and sacrifices at the level of the aspirations of our great people.

Brothers and sisters: You are aware that our economic efficiency is still weak. You are aware of this more than others. In most cases, our enterprises consume more than they produce. Help from the treasury is not a permanent solution to the weakness. Accumulative delay in the process of cleansing economic units has so far cost the Algerian state enormous sums, as everyone is aware. The same applies to the stoppage imposed on some of our economic units and the inability of some enterprises to pay their employees.

Brothers and sisters: These issues call for the need to reconsider the situation by deepening economic and social consultation between the social partners [employers and trade unions] and the government, and, subsequently, reach an agreement on a social contract among all the abovementioned parties. [passage omitted]

Brother and sister workers: It is the right of workers in particular and all the deprived people in general to expect that the efforts and sacrifices dictated by the current situation should be equally divided. The same applies to demands for strongly combating wastage and whatever that in any way may harm the national wealth.

It is the duty of the state to ensure an equal distribution of the cost of the economic crisis, promote national solidarity and social justice, and to end the deviations and plagues that waste our country's resources. It is also our duty under the principles of market economy to increasingly divert efforts and means toward production and the creation of national wealth outside the sphere of hydrocarbons. [passage omitted]

For this reason, brothers and sisters, we must rise above factors of fragmentation within our ranks, and we must also give priority to collective interest over any other consideration. We must unify our forces and strengthen our ranks, and this is the price for completing our national corrective movement.

Brothers and sisters; I am convinced that the national events that are bringing us together today will be a source of inspiration liable to give a stronger momentum to the national mobilization recently splendidly proven by Algeria [at the presidential elections]. As far as I am concerned, as usual I will make my utmost efforts to fully meet my commitments to the Algerian people. But it is my duty to remind everybody that the great action expected from us as a nation is to give an impulse to the national correction track which seeks, as you know, the completion of a democratic state in a climate of social justice and respect for our authentic values. Such a great action needs a sincere participation and help from everybody.

Glory and eternal life to our loyal martyrs [applause]. Long live Algeria. Peace and God's mercy be upon you [applause].

Algeria: Security Forces Kill 3 'Criminals;' Car Bomb Explodes

LD2402181596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement by the security services said that security forces today eliminated a dangerous gang of criminals in El Harrach [eastern Algiers suburb]. The statement said that at 1100 the security forces pinpointed the location of the gang in Prise d'Eau in El Harrach, and after cordoning off the area they launched an attack which led to the killing of the three members of the gang. Two automatic pistols and seven home-made grenade launchers were recovered.

Another statement by the security forces said that a booby-trapped car exploded at 0830 this morning in the eastern Algiers suburb of Eucalyptus. The source said that one person was killed and four injured as a result of the explosion. Nearby buildings and private cars were damaged.

The statement said that emergency and security services were in attendance on the spot to assist and provide first aid to the injured and to those who suffered as a result of the explosion.

Algeria: Security Services Eliminate 18 'Criminals'

LD2502205796 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement released today by the security services stated that the security forces have eliminated 18 criminals during various search operations in the provinces of Algiers, Blida, and Boumerdes.

The statement added that the security forces had recovered, following those operations, a quantity of weapons, medicine, and two cars, in addition to discovering a laboratory for bomb making in a place called Merja in Baraki municipality.

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak Calls Weizman To Express Condolences for Bombings

TA2502103996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Egyptian President Husni Mubarak several minutes ago phoned President 'Ezer Weizman and expressed condolences and great sorrow on behalf of himself and the Egyptian nation, denouncing what he termed the criminal attack. He asked 'Ezer Weizman to express his condolences to the bereaved families.

Egypt: Foreign Ministry Condemns Bombings, Urges Restraint

NC2502134496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1301 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 25 Feb (MENA)—The Egyptian Foreign Ministry's press spokesman has asserted that the two explosions that occurred in Jerusalem and Ashqelon today constitute a return to actions that should no longer occur in the context of the peace process. He said these actions should be condemned.

He also expressed sorrow for the victims that fell in the two attacks.

At the same time, the spokesman urged the concerned parties to act wisely, exercise self-restraint, and not resort to measures that are bound to arouse public sentiments or antagonize the other side.

He reaffirmed that Egypt's position remains firm on the need to continue the peace process and that it urges all the parties to halt any action that might hamper or adversely affect the peace process.

Egypt: Musa Calls Husayn Kamil's Killing 'Suspicious,' 'Regrettable'

NC2502134296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1257 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 25 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said today that the killing of Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil, his two brothers, and his father is a suspicious matter from beginning to end. He noted that it raised many questions and is by and large a regrettable episode.

Musa added that these bloody actions are bound to negatively affect the image of Arabs abroad, despite the fact that they do not really represent usual Arab modes of conduct or policy. He further explained that they should not become a usual mode of Arab conduct.

The foreign minister concluded his comment with the words: "Matters should not be handled in this way."

Egypt: Papers Comment on 'Execution' of Iraqi Defectors

NC2502080496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0600 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 25 Feb (MENA)—The Cairo press devotes their editorials and comments today to the killing of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's sons-in-law Kamil Husayn and his brother Saddam. The papers stress that this tragic incident has angered the civilized world. Even though the husbands of Saddam Husayn's daughters were killers who deserved no mercy, they still had the right to be tried.

In its editorial, AL-AKHBAR writes: The conjurer who continues to suppress the Iraqi people still has many tricks up his sleeve. The coming days will reveal more about this trickster who belongs to a strange species of bats that live by sucking human blood. Noting that Iraq's butcher has put an end to speculations that followed the return of the two brothers, it then asks: Will this creature, who is possessed by demons and evil spirits, persist with his sins and regard the Iraq people's lives as his own possession to dispense with as he likes. It adds: It is our fate to live in an age when there is a ruler who has an electronic button with which to control the lives of people fated to be the victims of his vampirism. This in an age when man has reached the moon, walked on it, and has started to feel his way toward other planets deep in space.

In his daily column "Idea," Mustafa Amin writes: The execution of Saddam Husayn's sons-in-law Major General Kamil Hasan and his brother Colonel Saddam shows that there is no government in Iraq. Just a gang that governs according to the laws of the jungle or as highwaymen. There are no investigations, trials, or lawyers. Men are executed by order of a single man who rules and controls Iraq absolutely.

He says that what happened shows justice is on holiday and injustice has become the law. This was a plot hatched by Saddam Husayn when he contacted his sons-in law and duped them into believing that he had pardoned them and that they could be assured about their lives, be well received, and get back their positions.

He adds: The two men believed the dictator even though they knew him very well, knew of his perfidy, and that it was in his nature to assure his friends, then butcher them.

Mustafa Amin stresses that what Saddam did was barbarism with no limit, which has happened in the 20th Century since Hitler and Stalin. The dictator pardoned his sons-in-law on Tuesday, ordered his daughters's divorce 24 hours later, and then ordered their execution after another 24 hours. The execution was carried out immediately and a third brother was also killed. He adds: Saddam Husayn's sons-in-law were criminals who deserved no pardon or mercy, but were entitled to be tried before being butchered like sheep.

In his "Dividing Lines" column in AL-JUMHURIYAH, AL-MASA' chief editor Samir Rajab writes: The results of the investigations the Iraqi government claim it is holding concerning the assassination of Saddam Husayn's sons-in-law, their brother, and their father, will never appear. There are no laws, values, or principles in Saddam's state. Whoever is killed is dead and buried amid songs praising the inspired leader—who knows when to deprive a body of its soul and when to cut this body into pieces before carrying out the execution. He adds: What is painful for any person is seeing a human being deprived of any humanity. Saddam Husayn has for a long time been hostile toward anything to do with humanity. Hence, the heinous crime he already committed against Kuwait on a dark and gloomy day in 1990 was merely a reflection of his abnormal personality that is wracked by inferiority complexes, which has been genetically passed on to his son 'Udayy, who insisted on seeking retribution from his sisters' husbands and did so.

In his editorial in AL-JUMHURIYAH, chief editor Mahfuz al-Ansari says that the killing of Husayn Kamil, his brothers Saddam and Hakim, and their father, did not come as a surprise and no one doubted that it would happen. It was the speed of the execution that came as a surprise. He says: The whole world is asking why Husayn Kamil, Saddam's protege and creation, dissented and defected to Jordan all of a sudden. And why he then decided to return to Baghdad, leaving behind [Jordan's King] Husayn's capital and al-Hashimiyah palace in Amman to live in the al-Sidiyah tomb—the house where Saddam entombed him together with his brothers and father without any warning. Al-Ansari adds: Despite the difficult question, the answer is very simple. It is simple because it comes from the nature of Saddam Husayn and his rule, under which all standards have fallen, values have disappeared, and the law of the jungle rules.

Under the headline "The Noble Family's Tree," AL-WAFD chief editor Jamal Badawi writes: In a barbaric massacre that took only a few minutes, Maj. Gen. Husayn Kamil al-Majid, his two brothers, and his father, were assassinated hours after the Iraqi ruler's daughters divorced their husbands. This sudden announcement was the signal for carrying out the sentence of the court that was held in the house that brought the al-Majid family members to their appointment with death.

He says: This tragic end closed one of the bloody pages in Saddam Husayn's history. I do not believe this incident that angered the civilized world will move the Iraqi people, who have become used to these massacres. One cannot rule out demonstrations wishing long life to the butcher ruler and congratulating him on his victory. The Iraqi people were not deceived for long by the official version of the incident and the shortcomings in its production, even if that version said some of the attackers were killed so as to give the impression of a battle, attackers and defenders, and people who happened to be in the area killed. All these ridiculous explanations could not deceive the television viewers, but were merely the spices for this cooked story.

Jamal Badawi goes on to say: People there know from experience how massacres are managed and how acts of physical liquidation are carried out by a barbaric regime that knows nothing about law, judiciary, or human rights. There are teams always ready to assassinate and they act on a signal from the butcher masquerading as a ruler. He asks: Why did Husayn Kamil return to Baghdad when he knew he would not be pardoned or shown mercy by the ruling butcher. Was he so stupid as to fall into the trap of his own free will. He concludes: It does not pay to be hasty in giving an explanation to this puzzle.

Libya

Libya: JANA Notes UN Mission Statement on 'Spiteful' U.S. Policy

LD2402124196 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1015 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 24 Feb (JANA) — The Great Jamahiriyah mission at the UN has issued a statement, which it has circulated to all branches of the media in New York, regarding American officials use of the name of Libya, for a reason or otherwise, in everything and the fabrication of false accusations against Libya, a matter which confirms the spiteful policy being pursued by the U.S. Administration against Libya. The statement says:

For a particular reason or otherwise, we are often taken by surprise by U.S. State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns, who invokes the name of Libya in any issue he raises at his news conferences and his quite hasty issuance of prejudgments. In his irrational talk on 16 February 1996, he made himself a judge at his news conference and issued his verdict by saying that the two Libyan citizens [involved in the Lockerbie incident] should be brought to the United States, should be convicted, and imprisoned.

What arouses astonishment is the fact that U.S. officials — from the President to the State Department spokesman — issue judgments by convicting before trial those citizens suspected of being involved in the so-called Lockerbie issue. However, the officials insist that Libya should hand the suspects over to the United States to be tried, ignoring in the process that prejudgment, and the fact that inciting public opinion against them will not allow a fair and sincere trial, a matter which made the U.S. judiciary itself refuse to try those who were accused of the Oklahoma bombing in the same city, because the propaganda campaigns against them and the hostile atmosphere will not allow the accused to have a fair trial.

Evidence shows that the U.S. Administration does not regard the Lockerbie incident as a legal case but as a political issue which it uses in order to bring pressure to bear on Libya in an attempt to blackmail it and make it submit to the U.S. domination policy, and that this political aim is more important as far as it is concerned than the establishment of justice, and being fair to the victims' families and ending the unjust sanctions against the Libyan people.

Therefore, we would like to attract the attention of world public opinion, in particular American public opinion, to this spiteful American policy against Libya, the continuation of which will not lead to anything other than more suffering by the victims' families and the Libyan people. We appeal to public opinion, and especially to the victims' families, to take the initiative and do whatever is necessary in order to convince the U.S. Administration to accept the holding of a neutral trial of those suspects at the headquarters of the International Court of Justice in The Hague. This is the proposal submitted by the Arab League and which has been welcomed by all regional and international organizations, which see in that a suitable way out which satisifies all parties and realizes justice for those suspects, and shows the truth and leads to the lifting of the unjust sanctions on the Libyan people, who have become a prisoner of this dispute.

Bahrain

Bahrain: Opposition Islamic Leader Interviewed on Unrest, Demands

NC2402191296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Shiite Shaykh 'Ali Salman, "one of the most prominent Bahraini opposition figures," by correspondent Mahdi Hasan; place and date not given; from the "News and Reports" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Your Eminence Shaykh 'Ali Salman, news agencies have reported unrest and fires in some areas in Bahrain, and the Shiite citizens have been blamed for it. What do you say to these claims?

[Salman] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. The opposition clearly uses peaceful methods. In its statements and meetings with the world press and other media, the opposition has emphasized that in its demands for the return of the National Council and the reinstitution of the Constitution it uses only peaceful methods. But the intense oppression used by the state — killing people, attacking their sacred homes and mosques, and placing them under a great deal of pressure — necessarily results in some individual outbursts as a reaction to the state violence. The opposition generally sticks to peaceful methods and always calls for adherence to this policy.

[Hasan] Your Eminence Shaykh 'Ali Salman, reports also indicate that the Bahraini Government has withdrawn the tanks and armored vehicles from some sensitive streets in Bahrain. Can you confirm these reports?

[Salman] There is confirmation that yesterday and today the number of armored vehicles in the streets was reduced. We believe, however, that there is no need for such things in the first place. Dialogue, reason, and wisdom are the real suitable replacements for these measures, which will only add fuel to the fire.

[Hasan] Your Eminence Shaykh 'Ali Salman, how do you evaluate the Bahraini Government's position on the opposition's demands? Is the Government making any response to these demands?

[Salman] Regrettably, the Government is evading giving an answer to the basic demand—namely, the return of the National Council. So far, no official, senior or junior, has come forward to say clearly that the National Council will be reestablished or otherwise. No one has addressed the issue of popular participation in political decisionmaking, the revival of the National Council, or the reactivation of the Constitution. No official has offered any answers on this issue. The state's attempt to deflect the issue and to speak only of a security problem is wrong; it will not succeed in changing the existing situation.

[Hasan] Do you think the Bahraini Government's failure to soften its position on the demands of the opposition will mean that this abnormal situation will continue?

[Salman] This was proved by the developments over the past year and the past few months. Using security methods to deal with political and social demands is an unviable option; it only perpetuates the crisis and makes the two sides pay a price higher than what this small country—in terms of both population and area— can afford. There is no chance of a solution through force. I therefore call on the government to promptly engage in a serious and direct dialogue with the opposition, lest it realize the need for it a year or two too late, God forbid.

[Hasan] Your Eminence Shaykh 'Ali Salman, have you offered a new initiative for a dialogue with the Bahraini Government?

[Salman] The opposition always says it is ready to sit at the negotiating table and to engage in a dialogue to end the existing situation. This is a firm opposition policy; the opposition does not need to offer a specific model. But we always try and knock on every door where we may hear a word or an opinion.

[Hasan] Thank you Shaykh 'Ali Salman.

[Salman] Thank you.

Bahrain: Opposition Figure Blames Government for Unrest

NC2502202896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Shaykh Muhammad Yusuf al-Bahrani, in London, by correspondent 'Isam Hasan; date not given; from the "News and Reports" Program—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] World news agencies have reported massive disturbances in the al-Sanabis and (Jannusan) areas in Bahrain. There have also been calls from the public to world countries to stop these violations. What is your information about this?

[Al-Bahrani] In fact the violations in al-Sanabis and Jannusan began about two days ago following a two-day blockade. The Bahraini security authorities' methods of violation are not new. News agencies and various media outside Bahrain reported the violations in al-Nuwaydirat district, where 'Abd-al-Wahab Husayn, a key member of the initiative committee, comes from. Members of this committee played a primary role in calming the situation and proved their ability to use reason to restore security and stability to the country.

Previously there was another clear example in al-Sitrah, where the area was attacked following a minor incident. The same thing is now happening in al-Sanabis and (Jannusan), where all the citizens are being blamed for minor incidents under various pretexts alleged by the Interior Ministry through its official media.

The reaction takes the form of extreme oppression, terrorism, and harshness. All residents in the area are being arrested without charges. Everyone between 16 and 40 is arrested and taken to an unknown destination, so the number of people arrested in this area cannot be determined.

[Hasan] Is there any obvious reason for these violations? Have the residents of these two areas committed any specific crime for which they can be held responsible?

[Al-Bahrani] Nothing of the kind. All we know is that the state is conducting this kind of campaign in various parts of Bahrain. I believe that the state is trying to force the people into a battle for survival, but the citizens' wisdom prevents this from happening. We know that the citizens are anxious to spare the country the hazards of violence more than any foreigner working with the security agencies, beginning with Ian Anderson and ending with the lowliest policeman from the Batanis and the Pakistani Balushis.

[Hasan] Do we understand from this that there is an attempt to drag the people into a battle they do not want?

[Al-Bahrani] Yes, I believe so, because ever since the citizens began their movement, they have sought reform. We are citizens demanding reform, wherever we are, both inside and outside the country. It is the government that opposes reform, so I might say we are not oppositionists. We are citizens who have demands to which the government objects. It is opposed to reform, development, progress, and recognition of the rights provided in the Constitution of the state of Bahrain that was signed by the amir himself more than 20 years ago.

Bahrain: 4 Charged With Causing Explosions Confess

LD2302203796 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1810 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 23 Feb — An official source at the Bahraini Interior Ministry here today said that the four people charged with a number of explosions in various parts of Bahrain were 'Abdallah Nasir Muhammad Abdullah Al Tawq, 'Ali Hasan 'Abdallah al- Ghannam, Hamzah Abd al-Hasan Ibrahim Muhammad Salih, and Ahmad Haydar Abbas Haydar.

The GULF NEWS AGENCY [WAKH] quoted the source as saying: "Members of the terrorist group revealed in their confessions before the investigating judge how they were trained to make explosive devices locally and how to detonate them in various areas with a view to attracting media attention and undermining security and stability in the country."

The source pointed out that members of this group had used stolen vehicles to facilitate their operations and conceal their identities.

He said: "The activity of the group began on 9 July last year when elements of the group detonated two time bombs at two trading centers of the International Navigation Company; one in the Diplomatic District and the other in the al-Adliyyah District."

He added: "The group planned to detonate devices at a number of hotels; its members placed two devices at the Meridian Hotel on 17 January, one of which exploded in the ground floor toilets while the other was found by security services in the hotel's shopping arcade and defused.

The same group placed a time bomb at the Diplomat Hotel which caused material damage and injury to some of the hotel's employees. They also detonated another time bomb which was placed in a stolen car parked near the entrance to Isa Commercial City on 14 February [1996] with a view to paralyzing trade activities and spreading fear and terror among the residents in the area."

Bahrain: Bomb Explodes in Front of Newspaper Office

NC2402192896 Paris AFP in English
1916 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, Feb 24 (AFP) — A home-made bomb exploded in front of the offices of a local newspaper near here late Saturday causing damage but no casualties, a member of staff at the daily AL-AYYAM said.

He said that a timed bomb had gone off and the "explosion had damaged two private vehicles including that of the editor in chief of the newspaper."

The AL-AYYAM which has offices in al-Jufayr is known to be close to the Bahraini government.

It was the fourth bomb attack in Bahrain since mid-January.

The Gulf archipelago has been rocked by 14 months of political violence, since the arrest in December 1994 of a Moslem Shiite cleric who called for the restoration of parliament suspended in 1975.

Bahrain: Officials Contact AL-AYYAM Chief Editor on Blast

JN2502101996 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0800 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 25 Feb (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the prime minister of the State of Bahrain, has praised the important role of the local press in exposing terrorism and the terrorist schemes aimed at undermining security and stability in Bahrain and striking at the accomplishments made throughout decades by its sincere and honorable sons.

In a telephone contact with Nabil Ya'qub al-Hamar, chairman of the board of directors and chief editor of AL-AYYAM, his highness said those responsible for blowing up the chief editor's car near the newspaper premises will not escape punishment and all state bodies, supported by the people who do not tolerate any harm to the country, will not hesitate to unearth and foil the terrorist schemes and maintain security and stablity in Bahrain as has always been known to its people.

The chief editor thanked his highness the prime minister for his kind gesture toward him and the foundation employees and for his constant support for the Bahraini press. He pledged to continue the hard and sincere work for the welfare of the country, adding that such incidents would not dissuade the press from carrying out its mission and presentation of facts regardless of the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of others. This, he said, is a national duty which will be carried out by all of AL-AYYAM employees with a sense of responsibility from which they will never deviate.

Interior Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin Khalifah Al Khalifah also telephoned the chief editor and was reassured about the situation. He conveyed his greetings to all the AL-AYYAM employees and praised the paper's important role in exposing the terrorist and subversive schemes.

Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa', minister of cabinet affairs and information, yesterday visited AL-AYYAM premises to be reassured about the progress of work there and the safety of all workers of the paper.

A strong explosion shook AL-AYYAM building last night. Unidentified persons planted an explosive charge under the car of the chairman of the board of directors and chief editor.

Bahrain: AL-AYYAM Describes Blast as 'Medal' Awarded to Paper

JN2502114796 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0750 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 25 Feb (WAKH)—Today's issue of the Bahraini newspaper AL-AYYAM asserts that the attack on the vehicle of the paper's editor-in-chief was a medal awarded to AL-AYYAM.

In an editorial by the editor-in-chief today, the paper says: The attack by the elements of darkness was a medal awarded to AL- AYYAM and recognition of the strength of its word. It is a medal that will not only give it a higher status in the eyes of others, but will also increase its prestige even in the hearts of those who tried to undermine its determination through this foolish explosion that beckons nothing except despair and helplessness in the face of a word that is capable of exposing their plans to destroy all that is beautiful in this homeland.

The paper adds: It is the fruitful tree that is always targeted, as the minister of cabinet affairs and information described the blatant attack targeting AL-AYYAM newspaper in a desperate attempt to halt the power of the word in expressing the futility of the case advocated by those standing behind the attack. They imagined they could defy the strong honest word, which revealed the falsehood of their allegations and exposed their claims.

The paper says had it not been for the vigorous words of AL-AYYAM and had AL-AYYAM not always been the brilliant tree that confronts the senseless wave of violence, those people would not have dared to try to silence it. Now, this tree rises even more brilliantly following this attempt. It is growing bigger and more luminous. Despite its young age, it stands like an oak tree touching the sky.

The paper continues: As usual, AL-AYYAM shines with every new morning. We are sure that those who carried out the attack last night will again read strong and honest words throughout its pages as is the case with the paper every morning. Here it is today, like everyday, beautiful and magnificent in the hands of our readers. It is stronger than the dream of those who tried to attack it by means of such ignorant and reckless games that ride the wave of political violence in despair and submissiveness to the unknown, while they themselves are puppets in the hands of those trading in slogans.

Concluding, the paper says: AL-AYYAM was not in need of such a medal as that which decorated its chest last night. However, the results of the explosion were contrary to the expectations of the desperate ones who forgot that they could not silence words through smoke and gunpowder. If they have a stronger weapon, then the pages of AL-AYYAM will be open for them on condition that they have a stronger logic than smoke that rises and soon disappears, while AL- AYYAM remains as tall as an oak tree defying the explosions. What happened last night was no more than a testimony that AL-AYYAM has succeeded in its mission. Are they now convinced that their attempts were only wasted?

Qatar

Qatar: 2 Guards Wounded 'by Mistake' in Exchange of Fire

NC2402205196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2025 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Doha, 24 Feb (MENA)—Two patrols of the Amiri Guard in Qatar exchanged gunfire this evening; two guards were slightly wounded.

The QATARI NEWS AGENCY said the incident occurred by mistake.

The agency cited a statement by the General Command of the Qatari Armed Forces as saying: "An Amiri Guard patrol fired by mistake at another Amiri Guard patrol this evening near al-Jidah Square in Doha. Two Amiri guards were slightly wounded."

The Qatari Government last week announced that it had uncovered a conspiracy to overthrow the regime. It arrested a number of suspects and accused foreign elements of involvement.

Yemen

Yemen: Egypt Advises Sanaa To Avoid Military Option Over al-Hanish

NC2502151096 Cairo MENA in English
1420 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Feb 25 (MENA)—Egypt's Foreign Ministry has advised Yemen to avoid entanglement in a military solution to end its dispute with Eritrea over the Hanish Red Sea islands, according to a Yemeni political source.

Egyptian officials contend that the current international balance does not allow for a military solution as an option to a conflict between two countries, the source told MENA.

In addition, the sensitivity of the area under dispute will not permit Yemen to take unilateral action of a military nature, the source added.

Egypt has affirmed to Yemeni officials the existence of international powers with plans for the redemarcation of vital areas of strategic importance on the world map and these powers will not accept any change to their plans, the source said.

Egypt has also hinted to the existence of a regional power with an interest in keeping Yemen occupied which will do its utmost, directly and indirectly, to maintain the status quo and to stop Yemen from settling the dispute in its favour, the source added.

Iraq: Husayn Kamil Killed in Attack by 'Family Members'

NC2302225396 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2212 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 23 Feb (INA)—An Interior Ministry spokesman stated the following tonight:

A number of youths from the 'Abd-al-Ghafur al-Bumajid and al-Busultan families killed Husayn Kamil and his brothers Saddam and Hakim during an armed clash in the house in the al-Sayyidiyah area of Baghdad where Husayn Kamil stayed following his return from Jordan. Two of his cousins who attacked the house, Tha'ir 'Abd-al- Qadir al-Majid and Ahmad 'Abd-al-Ghafur al-Majid, were killed during the armed clash. Other attackers who were his cousins were injured.

Kamil Hasan, the father of Husayn Kamil, who was in the house was also killed.

Some family members said that they sought to kill him in implementation of a decision taken by the family last August proscribing his life for betraying the homeland and tarnishing his family's reputation.

The relevant authorities are continuing their investigations of the incident.

Iraq: Family of Husayn Kamil Explains Reasons for Killing

JN2402120696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1010 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 23 Feb (INA) — The cousins of President Saddam Husayn Albumajid and Albusultan have sent a message to his excellency stressing in it that a noble, faithful, and struggling family from the president's kinsmen has suffered a great injustice that the devil hatched for those he deceived and who had obeyed him. It thus became a disgraceful branch of a noble tree when Husayn Kamil and others betrayed their trust; and this inflicted great harm on the noble values of our people and kinsmen.

They added: The duty of cutting off the disgraceful branch of this noble tree continued to weigh on us. Even though you, as the state and on the basis of your legal responsibilities, pardoned their shameful acts, the sons of President Saddam Husayn's cousins have decided to resolutely cut off as a jihad act the heads of the traitors. This was done on this blessed day of Friday, 4 Shawwal 1416 Hegira, corresponding to 23 February 1996.

The cable notes the death of Tha'ir 'Abd-al-Qadir Sulyaman al-Majid and Ahmad 'Abd-al-Ghafur Sulayman al-Majid. 'Ala' 'Abd-al-Qadir Sulayman al-Majid, Habib Salih Ahmad al-Sultan, Jamal Mustafa 'Abdallah were injured. The traitors deliberately killed with their bullets citizens Na'ib Jarallah Sha'ban and Dakhil 'Abd-al-Hasan Muhammad, who were in the area, and child Tha'ir Kamil Hadi.

Traitor Husayn Kamil's family had sent a cable to President Saddam Husayn following his defection to Jordan last August in which they disavowed him and declared that the family has unanimously proscribed [ihdar—provision in Islamic shari'ah declaring the taking of someone's life legal] his life. They also denounced his cowardly action and stressed their rejection of his treason, which can only be washed away by punishment according to God's shari'ah.

Iraq: Funeral of 'Martyr Heroes' Killed in Husayn Kamil Attack Reported

JN2402122296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1058 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 24 Feb (INA)—The funeral of martyr heroes Tha'ir 'Abd-al-Qadir Sulayman al-Majid and Ahmad 'Abd-al-Ghafur Sulayman al-Majid took place in Baghdad today. They were martyred in the Jihad operation carried out by youths from the Al 'Abd-al-Ghafur Albu-Majid and Albu-Sultan tribes to cut off the heads of the traitors.

The coffins of the two martyrs, wrapped in the Iraqi flag which carries the inscription of God is great, were placed on two convertible cars.

The funeral was held in the square opposite the unknown soldier's monument. It was attended by 'Izzat Ibrahim, Revolution Command Council [RCC] vice chairman, RCC members, Iraqi Command members, ministers, and Ba'th party and state officials.

The relatives of the two martyrs from the Albu-Majid and Albu- Sultan tribes, tribal heads and notables from Baghdad, the Salah al- Din Governorate, other governorates, and a large crowd of Iraqis also attended the funeral.

The bodies of the two martyrs were then taken to their final resting place in the Tikrit District in the Salah al-Din Governorate.

Iraq: Al-Samarra'i Views Killing of Saddam's Sons-in-Law

NC2402195996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former Iraqi Military Intelligence chief and leader of the Iraqi

National Movement, by correspondent Mahdi Hasan; place and date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Hasan] What is your assessment of the return of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's sons-in law to Baghdad and their subsequent murder? What is your assessment of the published story on the murder of the two brothers and other family members?

[Al-Samarra'i] Husayn Kamil's return to Iraq was the result of great frustration, as I noted in a previous interview with Tehran Radio's Arabic service and with other international news agencies. His return to Baghdad was an bad decision and was, as I described it, a return to hell. I also noted that revenge would be taken on him and it would be explained as a family stance or reaction. In fact, he was killed by members of the Special Security Forces under 'Udayy's direct supervision in an assault on the house where Husayn Kamil, his father, and brothers were staying.

Regarding the killing of the other man—Tha'ir 'Abd-al-Qadir Sulayman al-Majid, nephew of Brigadier General Shabib Sulayman al- Majid, Saddam's escort—he was killed while standing beside Husayn Kamil during a visit.

This incident shows that Saddam Husayn's crimes will never cease until he is toppled. This incident has stripped this criminal regime of its last mask before some Arab regimes that are trying and urging reconciliation with him. However, these efforts at reconciliation will certainly fail utterly. This incident puts an end once and for all to the false ethical considerations, if there were any left regarding Saddam. We maintain that this is Almighty God's punishment, by making them torment and kill one another until this criminal clan, which has immersed the whole region in a sea of blood, is finished. More than one million Iraqis and hundreds of thousands of Iranian and Kuwaiti brothers have been martyred as a result of Saddam's bloody crimes.

[Hasan] I gather from your remarks that the murder of Husayn Kamil and his brothers has dealt a moral blow to the Iraqi Government, right?

[Al-Samarra'i] And also a tremendous ethical blow. Saddam has lost everything that might make some say that he still had some ethics, values, or honesty in keeping promises. He once tore up the Algiers Agreement, which he had signed before the world; this time he gave his word and pledge to Husayn Kamil, but he repudiated his promise and murdered Husayn Kamil before the eyes of his people. Had this incident not been premeditated, why all this media furor and why should the media carry a statement? Saddam wanted to announce that he had punished him. Otherwise, if the incident were normal, it would not have been highlighted in the media.

[Hasan] Certain observers believe that the murder of Husayn Kamil and his brothers may have a negative impact on the Iraqi Government's domestic situation. What do you have to say?

[Al-Samarra'i] Certainly. The murder will, or rather has already, completely fragmented the clan. The so-called Husayn al-Majid, or al-Majid clan has been finished off. Only Saddam Husayn and his two criminal sons survive. All the others have been alienated and there is blood vendetta among them. The blood has moved from the Iraqi-Iranian borders and the Iraqi-Kuwaiti borders into Saddam Husayn's home. Saddam's home has caught fire and it will have detrimental effects. In addition, on the external level, there is no longer any room for anyone to demand that the sanctions be lifted. Demands for the sanctions to be lifted have become unethical.

Iraq: SAIRI Chairman Views Baghdad Events

LD2402153596 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1015 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with SAIRI Chairman Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given; from the "Events and Comment" program — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq [SAIRI], may God give you happy times, peace, and blessings. [passage omitted]

Like us and the rest of the world, you have been following the news of the return to Iraq of Husayn Kamil, his brother, and Saddam's daughters. Let us have the story from the beginning. Why did Husayn Kamil decide to return to Iraq?

[Al-Hakim] [passage omitted] From the moment Husayn Kamil defected we said that this issue did not deserve to be treated as a matter of such importance. However, the Western media in particular have been talking about him at length in such a way that some people thought Husayn Kamil would have a great role to play in the future of Iraq.

We believe there were two main reasons behind his return. First, the general stance of the Iraqi opposition, particularly the true opposition within it, as well as the stance of the states neighboring Iraq, in addition to the various parties of the opposition. These parties and states would not agree to deal with Husayn Kamil, despite numerous attempts on his part to contact them.

The second reason behind his return was his failure to agree with any of the people who tried to deal with him. This led him to an absolute state of despair about how to continue. He belongs to a category of people who are looking for positions and are without any principles at all. This is the overall moral stance of this group and these people. They have no morals. The only things that motivate them are their ambitions and what they can do in the future.

After Saddam promised to pardon him and the members of his tribe, Husayn Kamil believed that he would be able to return to his previous position if he returned to Iraq. He believed in these promises and returned, forgetting the moral nature of the people he was dealing with.

[Correspondent] Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, you issued a statement denying a report that from the first, Husayn Kamil's departure from Iraq to Jordan and his return was a prior arrangement and a card used by the ruler of Baghdad in the political game, and then he got rid of him immediately on his return to Iraq. Do you believe that Husayn Kamil's departure from Iraq was genuine for the purpose of opposing the regime?

[Al-Hakim] According to the information available to me and according to my knowledge of the nature of the regime and the ethics of those persons, I believe there are two probable reasons for his departure. First, the depth of the internal disputes within the family and Saddam's entourage is such that threats of killing have become commonplace in their midst. Second, Husayn Kamil despaired of the regime and its future; therefore he tried to leap over this future and draw up a post-Saddam future for himself. However, when he let Iraq and did not find for himself any prospect of working abroad, he returned to his previous stance, believing that he could continue along that path.

In politics anything is possible, but I very strongly rule out that the operation was manufactured and programmed by Saddam. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, the Lebanese daily AL- SAFIR today published a report saying that 'Udayy, son of the ruler of Baghdad, has been in Jordan for the past two weeks and is in a coma as a result of an injury to his head. Do you believe that this news was leaked in order to cover up the news of the killing of Husayn Kamil and to keep 'Udayy from this operation?

[Al-Hakim] I believe that what happened yesterday — the killing of Husayn Kamil — has many political justifications. The most important political consideration is that the ethics of Saddam and his henchmen are exposed — they will not honor undertakings or agreements. An amnesty was issued by the so-called Revolution Command Council and the Council of Ministers, but that amnesty was revoked in a very short time and in this tragic way. This reflects the nature of the regime and the fact that it is not committed to any laws or conventions. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Let us stop at this point, Muhammad Baqir al- Hakim, and wonder which regime are we talking about. Husayn Kamil, 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, and Saddam Kamil were the cornerstones of this regime. So what is left of this regime?

[Al-Hakim] The regime in Iraq consists of Saddam [Husayn]. He has all the power. He is the gang leader, and all the rest are simply his henchmen and servants. There is no party, establishment, army, or anything of the kind. In this regime there is the secret establishment headed and led and controlled by Saddam. [break in transmission]

[Correspondent] We are wondering here about the kind of reaction from 'Ali Hasan al-Majid after the killing of the sons of Kamil Hasan al-Majid.

[Al-Hakim] As you know, Saddam's regime is based on physical liquidation. This is not limited to those who are accused by the regime of carrying out acts of opposition, but usually includes all relatives and those attached to them — they suffer a fate similar to that of Husayn Kamil. His brother and his father have been killed, and we are expecting other assassinations which the regime has not mentioned yet. Therefore, since the defection of Husayn Kamil, 'Ali Hasan al-Majid and the rest of the group have all been in a state of terror, fear, and siege.

The regime recently tried to put all these aside so as to confirm 'Udayy's position in Iraq's future. Disputes have been sharp and strong between the group of 'Udayy and Saddam on the one hand and the groups of Watban and Barzan [Saddam's half brothers] on the other, and then there are the groups of Husayn Kamil and 'Ali Hasan al-Majid. These disputes will persist until Almighty God brings relief to His children, the Iraqi people. These disputes will undoubtedly put the regime in a very weak position if the people take action, and this will highlight Saddam's crimes and weakness to the Iraqi people. Saddam may have carried out this action to show his strength to the Iraqi people and to say: I can still kill, punish, and pursue people, even though this case touches us personally.

[Correspondent] Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, briefly, how do you expects events inside Baghdad to develop after, or in the light of, what happened last night? Do you expect dramatic developments to take place quickly within the ruling gang, and do you expect a popular reaction in the coming period of time?

[Al-Hakim] As you know, the Iraqi people believes that the [word indistinct] operation should inevitably consist of a serious and organized action by the people and the Army, and this action is now continuing inside Iraq. We are extensively developing relations between the sons of the Iraqi people and the Iraqi Army, especially as the situation inside Iraq shows that the southern, western, and northern areas of Iraq — and also the central area — are now adopting a unified attitude to confront the regime.

On the other side, the regime is exposing day after day its weakness and incapacity, as well as its failure to deal with the problems and issues inside Iraq. Therefore we believe that events will rapidly succeed each other, and this we have talked about quite clearly during our visit to Kuwait. [passage omitted]

Iraq: INC Head Comments on Deaths of Defectors

LD2402174996 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1034 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Interview with Dr. Ahmad al-Chalabi, chairman of the Executive Council of the INC, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Correspondent] We will begin with Dr. Ahmad al-Chalabi. To begin with we want to talk about your assessment at INC [Iraqi National Congress] of what happened last night in Baghdad.

[Al-Chalabi] What has happened in Baghdad is only normal to Saddam Husayn. His sentiment for revenge takes over all of his other sentiments. He has carried out this operation in the brutal way we have seen to demonstrate to the world once again that there is no law in Iraq, that a defendant is killed and then questioning begins, that what Husayn Kamil had done was unforgivable, even if he [Saddam Husayn] had issued a pardon for him. Therefore, the whole world sees that any pardon issued by Saddam Husayn, along with all the previous numerous pardons he had issued, were meaningless and that the fate of anyone who dares oppose Saddam Husayn is murder. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Dear listeners, once again I return to Dr. Ahmad al-Chalabi. We would like to ask if you believe that the defection process of leaderships and individuals from the ruling regime will take place in the near future, or will the fate of anyone intending to defect to outside of Iraq to a neighboring state be similar to the fate of Husayn Kamil; the defection of Husayn Kamil has broken the psychological barrier for the opposition, and can we expect the emergence of another Husayn Kamil, but not with the aim of defecting, but with the aim of confronting and toppling the regime, or to arrange a coup attempt?

[Al-Chalabi] The experience of Husayn Kamil has proved that to think about an easy coup in Baghdad is an idea so remote from reality, because Saddam has proved that he is capable of controlling the special security apparatus and the special Republican Guard. Despite the fact that Husayn Kamil was very closely related to several senior officers within these apparatus', Saddam's control over the latter is total. Husayn Kamil was unable to disturb not even an inch anyone within these apparatus, especially if we bear in mind that Staff Major General Kamil Mustafa 'Abdallah Sultan, the commander of the 1st Corps of the Republican Guard, is the brother-in-law of Husayn Kamil, and that 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, the former defense minister and one of the pillars of the regime, is the uncle of Husayn Kamil. Therefore, I would like to say that the idea of bringing about a change by way of a coup has suffered a major blow as a result of the experience of Husayn Kamil. The preferred method, which has any chance of succeeding in bringing about a change in Iraq, is a movement by forces of the Iraqi army and the forces of the opposition to attack the regime and not wait for a coup. This is the first point, and the second point is that Saddam will show his immediate circle that nobody will deal with any one of them outside Iraq, and that the major powers — especially the western powers — and the Arabian Gulf states and the Iraqi opposition did not deal with Husayn Kamil, despite the characteristics he had — money, contacts, and relationship. Therefore, they will not deal with anyone of the others [members of Saddam's immediate circle].

We at the INC published a document some 30 months ago condemning a group of 14 individuals who are close to Saddam, including Husayn Kamil, and demanded that they should stand trial on crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide crimes. This document contains great details about these crimes and has important legal studies. When Husayn Kamil left Iraq we demanded that he should be interrogated prior to his trial. In April 1993, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher had informed the INC delegation when it visited him in Washington, that the U.S. supported the setting up of a commission to investigate the evidence concerning the crimes of the regime. Had our views been heard and Husayn Kamil interrogated about this we would have found that he would have received a more humane and more legally-motivated treatment than what he received at the hands of his father-in-law, Saddam Husayn. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] In the end what is Dr. al-Chalabi's comment?

[Al-Chalabi] I have two important points to clarify. First: When we talk about the change process in Iraq through cooperation between the opposition and the Armed Forces, I am talking about an experiment that took place last March. An alliance between some of the INC members carried out military operations in the north of Iraq against Saddam's Armed Forces. Here it became clear that the Armed Forces are poorly-trained and will not fight in defense of Saddam. We carried out a two-week operation during which we destroyed two divisions, including the 38th Division. We destroyed all its brigades, regiment by regiment. I disagree with the analyses of those who say that Saddam has a striking force with eight divisions and 15 armored brigades. Our experience is that Saddam's armored brigades are unable to do anything because of the lack of spare parts and the low morale among these troops.

I can say that the only existing force Saddam has is the special Republican Guard Force. This force is entrusted with the protection of his palaces and his personal safety in Baghdad. This force controls Baghdad. This force is not a fighting force. It is a force for protection, and it does not have any heavy armament.

The Iraqi Armed Forces have been destroyed on purpose by Saddam to avert the [possibility of a] coup. The Armed Forces are unable to move on their own. They must receive the support of the Iraqi opposition forces, and I recall here that the operations in the north have not been the only ones. In February 1995, the Badr Corps forces destroyed the 426th Brigade in al-'Amarah in 36 hours.

I am saying, had the Iraqi opposition had enough support, it would have been able to work with the Iraqi Armed Forces, mobilize them with its force, [exploit] the Armed Forces' feelings, and support their capabilities to cause change in Iraq. This is my point, and I believe that endeavoring to have a coup will not lead to any result.

The second point, regarding the issue of the trial of the accused: Saddam has managed to implicate tens of thousands of Iraqi's in his crimes. I recall here that putting any war criminals to trial requires huge means. [passage omitted] It is not possible to put tens of thousands on trial. Such a thing will destroy the Iraqi society more than Saddam has done. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Opposition Figures, Others Comment on Husayn Kamil's Death

NC2402215196 London MBC Television in Arabic 1810 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] The killing of the Iraqi president's son- in-law Husayn Kamil Hasan after his return to Baghdad has drawn negative reactions at both the popular and official levels in Syria. The Syrian press gave prominence to this news today, citing reports by Arab newspapers on the reasons for Husayn Kamil's return.

Syrian sources have asserted that the Iraqi president's son-in- law's killing, which fits Saddam Husayn's well-known methods, had been expected, though not that fast.

Iraqi opposition elements agree that the killing of the Iraqi president's son-in-law is a failure in terms of its scenario and direction.

[Begin recording] [Oppositionist Wafiq al-Samarra'i] It was an operation personally planned by the head of the regime. It truly confirms that Saddam is not to be trusted. He is personally responsible for all that happened. However, he does not care about historic and ethical principles.

[Mash'an al-Juburi, leader of the Iraqi opposition al-Watan Party] I believe that the regime wanted to distribute the blame for shedding Husayn Kamil's blood among all the members of the al-Majid family. The names Tha'ir 'Abd-al-Qadir and Ahmad 'Abd-al-Ghaffar were mentioned as being among the attacking force. This is not true. Husayn Kamil had earlier told me that he was in contact with Tha'ir. He hoped Tha'ir would be part of the change process, because he had problems with the regime. He appeared on television at one time with his head shaved and was accused of offending President Saddam. He was married to the daughter of Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr [former Iraqi president who stepped down in 1979]. Tha'ir had a fight with 'Udayy. He was killed for being one of [Husayn Kamil's] defenders. I believe the goal was to distribute the blame for his killing among the family members.

[Hasan al-'Alawi, an expert in Iraqi affairs] The killing was conducted in accordance with the principle that says death is a way of life. The Iraqi president begins with death and then takes the next steps. He, therefore, did not give himself a chance to benefit from Husayn Kamil, who spent 8 months or more in exile. During that time, he met with figures and representatives of different states and parties and returned to Iraq with a treasure of information. This information was destroyed in Husayn Kamil's house.

The incident reveals Saddam Husayn's psychology. He forgot about the political interests he could have gained if he had postponed Husayn Kamil's liquidation for some time. [end recording]

Iraq: Opposition Radio Comments on Husayn Kamil's Killing

NC2402161196 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1455 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The killing of Husayn Kamil and his family is part of the regime's terrorist nature. The incident demonstrates the regime's fascist nature and its dictatorial leadership, which does not hesitate to commit any crime or persecute anyone expressing his opinion, regardless of whether his views are sound or acceptable so long as they are inconsistent with the views of the regime itself.

Ever since it has dominated Iraq, the regime has pursued the policy of political assassination, a serious policy that dragged Iraq into a labyrinth. This policy has given license to destructive elements that interacted to bring about the aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran and then against the state of Kuwait.

It has become clear that the regime no longer tolerates any opposition, even from within the ruling family and the closest relatives. If we study Husayn Kamil's return to Iraq, we will see that it was decided on after the regime made promises. However, Husayn Kamil did not expect things to go this far.

Although we do not regret the killing of that criminal, who has been the target of our people's wrath, we would like to state one fact: This regime has gone beyond all limits and unleashed political assassinations that used to be done backstage and very quietly. Husayn got rid of his cousin 'Adnan Khayrallah Talfah by downing his helicopter. But what happened to Husayn Kamil clearly reflects the criminal reality of the regime. It was an illustration of the irrational recklessness of the regime, which gave its rival no chance, even for a while, thus showing that it cannot tolerate differing views. With its usual recklessness, the regime sent its security henchmen in the name of Husayn Kamil's clan to carry out on behalf of Saddam the sentence the tyrant passed, adding yet another crime to its record, a crime against one of the people closest to him.

We call on all those who are associated with the regime not to trust that regime. Nothing will protect them once the regime draws its sword and points it at their necks. What happened to Husayn Kamil can happen to any close relative. The regime does not care about relatives; it cares only about its personal welfare, which it puts before the homeland's.

The regime has proved its dishonesty and its unsound conduct. Hence, it has lost its credibility, even with family members.

Iraq: Shiite Opposition Radio Views Husayn Kamil's Killing

NC2502175096 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The head of the Saddamist government's two sons-in-law were killed on Friday [23 February]. They had returned to Baghdad on Tuesday with a promise of a pardon from the tyrant Saddam. The regime's news agency alleged that the two men, a third brother, and their father were killed in a family dispute.

Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil Hasan, his brother, and their wives sought asylum in Jordan on 8 August 1995. Their subsequent return to Iraq was in line with an agreement concluded through Saddam's ambassador to Jordan. What happened two days after their return came as a surprise to all observers of Iraqi affairs. An announcement was made that they had been killed in an interclan clash.

The fact that the Iraqi youth television station, owned by the small tyrant 'Udayy, was the first to broadcast the news is evidence that the incident had nothing to do with interclan vengeance or any other such allegation.

Some observers assert that the assassination was not an inter-family dispute but was carried out by the Iraqi intelligence services, in other words, the regime's executioners. Observers point out that if the issue had been a family affair, as the regime claims, Husayn Kamil's father should have been the person to inflict the punishment. Furthermore, why were Saddam's daughters divorced from the two brothers one day before their deaths? This shows it was premeditated.

The incident brings several issues to the fore. First of all, there are the moral considerations: The regime has demonstrated its despotic, terrorist nature by not sparing persons so close to it. Ever since it seized control of Iraq, the regime has made a virtue of terrorism and political assassination, dealing with the situation in Iraq in a criminal and vindictive manner. Secondly, the affair demonstrates the regime's undemocratic nature. It could not keep the two men alive even for a short time just to gain some credibility and show that it had changed, as it sometimes claims.

It is clear that the regime cannot tolerate any criticism and that it has reached a point of such feebleness and shakiness that it declares war on every person who criticizes it.

This incident also brings to the fore the vindictiveness and divisions within this family. The story is not finished and must necessarily have repercussions. It will certainly produce more grudges and infighting within the family, further weakening and fragmenting the regime.

This self-destructive situation will continue until the imminent fall of this murderous regime.

Iraq: Kurdish Radio Views Killing of Saddam's Sons-in-Law

NC2402171096 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Six months after the defection of Husayn Kamil Hasan, his brother Saddam Kamil, and their wives, the daughters of Saddam Husayn, to Jordan, both brothers and their wives returned to Baghdad on Tuesday [20 February]. They believed that the approval of the Iraqi dictator, of the so-called Revolution Command Council, and of the 'Aflaqite Ba'th Party's Regional Command for their return to Iraq would insure they were secure to live again under the dictatorial regime and give them an opportunity to defend the dictatorship and harass the Iraqi people. So they returned to serve the dictatorship. However, Husayn Kamil and his brother proved totally wrong. After their return to Baghdad they were forced to divorce their wives. Only three days after their return they were physically liquidated in farcical play acting in which Saddam Husayn himself played the lead and distributed the roles in advance.

Yes, Saddam Husayn killed Husayn Kamil, his partner in a series of crimes against the Iraqi peoples, his industry minister, director of his military industrialization, son-in-law, and his confidante in carrying out the secret provisions for his biological warfare program. Saddam Husayn even killed Husayn Kamil's father and another brother, Hakim.

We were not at all surprised when we heard the news of the murder Husayn Kamil, his father, and two brothers, because Saddam Husayn has grown accustomed to torturing his closest aides. He was brought up emersed in treachery since infancy. He breaks promises and betrays anyone who intends to help him, both countries and individuals. If we look back a little, specifically to the days before Iraq invaded Kuwait, we will see that Saddam Husayn had promised Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and, through him the international community, that he would not attack Kuwait. However, a few days later, on 2 August 1990, Iraq did exactly that. Saddam Husayn's forces attacked Kuwait, wrought devastation there, and committed the most heinous crimes against the Kuwaiti people.

Saddam Husayn physically liquidated dozens of his long-time comrades; to name but a few: 'Adnan Husayn, 'Abd-al-Khaliq al- Samarra'i, Fu'ad al-Rakabi, Muhammad 'Ayish, and others whom Saddam Husayn accused of treason. As as matter of fact, they did not betray Saddam. They just held views that were not completely identical to his own views and stances.

We will not address here the reasons that led Husayn Kamil and his wife to defect to Jordan. We will only emphasize one crystal clear fact—that is, Saddam Husayn, who butchered Husayn Kamil, partner of his crimes, his secretary, and son-in-law, cannot be expected to be loyal to the Iraqi peoples nor to fulfill his promises to the international community.

One final word: Those who intend to support Saddam Husayn, to trust him, to cooperate with him, and who favor living under his dictatorship and throwing themselves at his knees will enjoy a fate no better than that of Husayn Kamil Hasan, who served Saddam Husayn, loved dictatorship, and did not give up courting it even when he defected from the dictator's brutality.

Iraq: Opposition Figure— Saddam Responsible for Massacre

JN2402210196 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Statement over video by unidentified Iraqi opposition figure; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Saddam is personally responsible for the massacre in which Husayn Kamil and the other nine people who were with him were killed.

That incident shows that Saddam cannot be trusted at all, and that he continues his arrogance, criminality, and dictatorship. This is a clear message to the United Nations, the international community, the democratic forces in the world, and the free world that it is impossible to coexist with this bloody regime.

Iraq: Husayn Kamil's 'Last Statement' Before Return to Baghdad

JN2402093096 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 24 Feb 96 pp 1, 16

[Report by Nasir 'Arif]

[FBIS Translated Text] General Husayn Kamil has said that his decision to return to Iraq was made after he became firmly convinced that the world states are not interested in Iraq's right to self-determination, but in usurping its territory.

In his last statement before returning to Baghdad, Kamil said that the world is paying no attention to the Iraqi people's suffering, which has been continuing since the imposition of the six-year economic blockade. Rather, he said, the world is interested in exploiting the Iraqi people's wealth and resources. Therefore, he said, he had to return to Baghdad, which began to witness an improvement in political life.

Responding to a question on whether he would resume public duty after his return, he said that this is unimportant, though not difficult. He added that he may involve himself in other activities outside politics.

He described the Iraqi leadership's reaction to his decision to return as normal in view of his special relationship with President Saddam Husayn.

He said that his decision to return was a personal one and had nothing to do with Jordan, which has hosted him since his departure from Baghdad last August. He said that during their last meeting one week before his return, His Majesty King Husayn said he was free to return or to stay in Jordan.

He denounced some opposition groups. He said that Jordan's decision to allow some of them to open an office is a matter that concerns Jordan alone and that he cannot discuss such matters.

Iraq: Husayn Kamil Aides Reportedly Urged To Return to Baghdad

MM2302163496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 23 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Husayn Exerting Pressure To Urge Other Defectors To Return to Baghdad"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, Amman, New York, AL-SHARQ AL- AWSAT — An Iraqi opposition group has said that the former defector Husayn Kamil, who returned to Baghdad on Tuesday, left one of his aides behind in the Jordanian capital to urge other defectors to follow in his steps and return to Iraq. Meanwhile the U.S. representative to the United Nations reiterated other U.S. officials' view that the defection to Jordan last year of the Iraqi president's son-in-law was not "a kind of conspiracy." She stressed the importance of the information he supplied about Iraq's secret armament program.

The Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation [IBC], which is linked to the opposition Unified Iraqi National Congress, cited its correspondent in Amman as saying that "Husayn Kamil is currently staging an extensive campaign to urge all those who defected with him to Jordan last August, and other Iraqi figures who abandoned the (Iraqi) regime previously, to return to Iraq and work with the regime." The IBC said in a statement, of which AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT received a copy yesterday, that "one of the former directors of the Military Industrialization Organization (which was headed by Kamil before his defection from Baghdad), namely Sa'id Abu-Rukaybah, is playing a role in these activities in Amman." The IBC says that these activities "pose a real threat to all those opposed to the regime and who have abandoned it and defected to Jordan." [passage omitted]

Iraq: Husayn Kamil Events Said To Benefit Regime, Harm Opposition

MM2302153996 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 23 Feb 96 p7

[Article by 'Uthman Mirghani: "The Riddle of Husayn Kamil. By His Defection and Return, Husayn Kamil Benefited the Regime Much More Than He Has Harmed It"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Like his departure and defection to Jordan, Husayn Kamil's return will be the subject of a great deal of controversy, analyses, and interpretations. A great deal will be said and a lot will be written. But the truth will remain in the hearts of those concerned who will not reveal it to anyone but rather keep it as a family affair and as one of the secrets of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn and his close circle of confidants. The matter, however, does not concern the family alone but also the continuation of the regime and the methods it uses in its "secret wars" to ensure its survival.

It was stated that Husayn Kamil left or fled because of a problem between him and 'Udayy [Saddam's son]. But this view does not explain why Husayn Kamil found it necessary to declare his opposition to the entire regime and his determination to topple it "to save Iraq." He could have left and kept silent pending the solution of the problem that had arisen between him and a family of which he is a part, and with a regime of which he had been a basic element, so that he cannot wash his hands of it so easily.

It is now being said that he has returned after all doors had closed in his face and after failing to rally the opposition around him and to win the support and backing of the other regional and international states and sides (with the exception of Jordan).

But even for all these reasons, Husayn Kamil would not have returned to Iraq, particularly after being accused of treason, embezzlement, and defection, all of which are crimes punishable by death and lynching without any compassion or mercy. Indeed, lesser charges used to end in death under mysterious conditions in cases of even close relatives [of Saddam], as happened to 'Adnan Khayrallah Talfah, the president's cousin and brother-in-law.

Husayn Kamil would not have returned to Iraq had he known that his fate would be death, particularly as he knows better than anyone that safety guarantees and promises meant nothing. It is because of this that his return arouses great doubts about the entire story of his departure and his defection. These doubts intensify when one carries out a brief calculation leading to the fact that by his departure Husayn Kamil has created a great deal of confusion within the opposition ranks and in plans to topple the regime from the outside. Likewise, by his return he has created greater confusion within the ranks of the opposition and the enemies than within the ranks of the regime.

Indeed, there are some who believe that by his departure Husayn Kamil has upset and perhaps even impeded the plans and schemes aimed at toppling the regime in Baghdad. By his return now, he will impede and upset still more such plans and designs. For when he left Iraq he provided "information" and told a great deal of things which might have led to the revision of some of these plans and designs and consequently to their suspension. He returns to Baghdad today also carrying information which might cause impediments and confusion, for some time to come, in some of the designs to topple the regime in Baghdad.

Furthermore, his return will make the opposition from now on suspicious of anyone who dissents from the regime, even if they are truthful. His return and his "pardon" also might encourage some to return and might give the impression that changes have taken place in Baghdad. What is more important still is that those who had been working on plans to change conditions in Iraq from the outside will find themselves obliged to suspend them entirely for fear that some of these plans might have reached Baghdad via Husayn Kamil.

In view of all the above, the final analysis shows that Husayn's departure and return have benefited the regime in Baghdad much more than they have harmed it, and have harmed the opposition and its designs much more than they benefited them.

Whether the departure and return were part of a well-laid "scheme" or a genuine problem that has been settled "within the family," the winner of this round is without any doubt President Saddam Husayn and the losers are those who believed or were taken in by the story of his easy departure from and his easier return to the lion's den.

Iraq: INA Reports Saddam's Daughters File for Divorce

JN2302150896 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1430 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 23 Feb (INA)—INA has learned that the two daughters of leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect and preserve him, on Thursday, 22 February 1996, filed a divorce request. They are refusing to stay married to men who betrayed the homeland, the trust, and the lofty values of their noble families and kinsfolk.

INA learned that the request was filed in two forms: a summation of the official request and an annex that explains the principles on which their marriages with their husbands were based before and how and why they are now requesting separation.

In the annex, they describe how they learned the truth in Jordan, after Husayn Kamil appeared at a press conference, and how they asked to see the daughters of King Husayn. 'Aliyah, Zayn, and 'A'ishah [King Husayn's daughters] came to see them and were told by the daughters of leader President Saddam Husayn, God protect him, that they — Raghad and Rana Saddam — knew nothing about the true intentions of Husayn Kamil, which he expressed in his news conference. Saddam's daughters asked for an immediate meeting with King Husayn to inform him of this fact face to face and to ask him to facilitate their return to their country, people, and family because they had been deceived and misled by the two failed traitors.

The king's daughters continued to visit them. Saddam's daughters repeated the request, but the king did not reply and did not meet them, saying that he was very busy with his work.

God Almighty has now secured their release, however, and they have returned to their beloved homeland, their genuine people, and their noble family.

The divorce was granted yesterday, 22 February 1996.

INA will distribute the text of the divorce request and the annex to newspapers.

Praised be God, who helped leader President Saddam Husayn bring up his two daughters in a righteous, moral way, as embodied by their forbearance and loyalty to the dear homeland.

Iraq: Saddam's Son 'Udayy Said Injured, Treated in Amman

NC2402101696 Cairo MENA in English
0927 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Feb. 24—(MENA)—The elder son of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, 'Udayy Saddam, was moved to the Jordanian capital Amman two weeks ago, and was admitted to hospital to be treated of a head injury caused by a bullet, Beirut Radio quoted this morning authoritative diplomatic sources as saying. 'Udayy, who was admitted in hospital in a state of coma, is still in critical conditions and did not recover from his coma, the radio quoting these sources added.

Iraq: Lebanese Paper Cited on 'Udayy Hospitalization in Amman

JN2402101996 Damascus SANA in Arabic
0940 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 24 Feb (SANA)—The Lebanese newspaper AL-SAFIR issued today says that 'Udayy, the Iraqi regime president's son, was moved to the Jordanian capital, Amman, two weeks ago, and has since been hospitalized after being hit in the head by a bullet which sent him into a coma.

The paper cited informed diplomatic sources as saying that 'Udayy is still is an extremely critical condition and that he has not yet emerged from the coma.

Iraq: Al-Anbari on Results of Talks With United Nations

JN2302191796 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic
1653 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq's talks with the United Nations on the oil-for-food and medicine formula were suspended this week without any agreement. The talks will resume next month. According to a UN spokesman in New York, the talks between the two sides covered only five of the 12 issues necessary to reach an agreement to resume exporting Iraqi oil for humanitarian purposes. Ambassador 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, who headed the Iraqi delegation to the talks with the United Nations, assessed the recent round of talks for "The Events" program before he left Paris for Baghdad:

[Begin al-Anbari recording] The talks were of a technical and exploratory nature. They covered all issues related to the implementation of the oil-for-food and medicine program. Our delegation held 15 rounds of talks with the UN General Secretariat's delegation between 6 and 19 February. The talks were constructive, and both delegations worked seriously day and night. At the end of the sessions, the two sides reached an understanding on some points, but failed to do so on many other basic points. Moreover, no date was set for a second round of talks because both delegations must consult their leaderships for instructions on matters of disagreement. The two sides, however, have agreed that everything discussed at the rounds will be subject to what is called in English ad referendum. This is all I can say now. All remaining problems will be solved in future rounds. [end recording]

Iraq: INA on UN Talks, Prospects for Agreement

JN2402104496 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0815 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 24 Feb (INA)—On 22 February, UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali thoroughly reviewed with the Security Council the outcome of the first round of technical talks between Iraq and the UN General Secretariat.

Emerging from the Security Council consultations, the UN secretary general told reporters that he is awaiting the outcome of contacts by Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation to the talks, with the Iraqi Government. He added that he hopes the talks will resume as soon as possible.

In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY on 20 February, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said that the outcome of the first round of technical talks will be examined by the Iraqi leadership.

'Aziz added: "After examining the report that will be submitted by the Iraqi delegation to the technical talks, Iraq and the UN secretary general will hold consultations on a date for subsequent talks and also on the method of conducting such talks. This could take place in March."

Tariq 'Aziz stressed that the talks were technical in nature, and that they were conducted in a quiet and businesslike atmosphere. During the talks, the two sides exchanged views on a wide range of issues to reach a common understanding on all aspects of the issue in question. This confirms the positive nature of the talks, 'Aziz maintained.

Sources close to the Iraqi and UN delegations told the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY that the unofficial working paper produced at the end of 15 sessions of talks addressed a large number of technical issues that must be worked out to set the stage for the handling of the issue on the political level at a subsequent stage. The two delegations worked hard to formulate these issues, the sources added.

The sources went on to say: The discussions between the two delegations were frank and conducted with open minds.

At the conclusion of the last session of talks and prior to his departure from New York, Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi technical delegation to the talks, said that the two sides examined the issues raised to reach a very clear common understanding conducive to an agreement.

In a press statement, Official UN Spokeswoman Sylvana Foa said that over 18 and 19 February, Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali heard a detailed presentation by Hans Corell, head of the UN delegation to the talks, on the outcome of the talks that started on 6 February and lasted more than two weeks.

Following this presentation, UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali expressed his optimism and complete satisfaction with the outcome of the talks between the UN General Secretariat and Iraq. He pointed out that he views the unofficial working paper prepared by the two delegations as a positive step.

Many diplomats and media persons who followed the progress of the dialogue and the optimism accompanying it believe that Iraqi statements and the statements made by the UN secretary general, who expressed his complete satisfaction with the talks, reflect a strong desire to reach an agreement to the satisfaction of both sides. They added that this marks the achievement of a new stage in Iraq's relationship with the world organization, one based on understanding, cooperation, and mutual respect.

At a news conference at the conclusion of the final session of talks, Hans Corell, UN undersecretary general for legal affairs, said that the two delegations discussed detailed issues related to oil production and marketing. They also discussed the issue pertaining to the bank account, the purchase of food supplies and medicines, their shipment, and the bank transfers related to the marketing of oil and food and medicine purchases and distribution.

Corell said that he would inform Ambassador Tauter Ethel [name as transliterated], chairman of the UN Sanctions Committee, of the outcome of the technical dialogue whose first round was concluded on 19 February.

German Ambassador Tauter Ethel, chairman of the Sanctions Committee, announced early last week that based on the dialogue on the oil-for-food formula, Iraq is serious in its efforts to reach an agreement.

In a statement to CNN, he said: Iraq is in urgent need of some categories of refined food supplies and medicines. He added that his impression is that Iraq is serious in its efforts to achieve an agreement within the context of the ongoing dialogue with the United Nations.

Corell noted that the two delegations must set the stage for working out the issues that need to be worked out.

In their commentaries, Iraqi dailies address the outcome of the first round of technical talks, describing it as a significant step forward. They add that this outcome shows the serious desire of both sides to reach an agreement to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people and pave the way for the complete revocation of the sanctions clamped on Iraq.

AL-THAWRAH, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says: The most important thing that marked the quiet and businesslike atmosphere of the technical talks between the two sides was the open-mindedness and high transparency prevailing between Iraq and the United Nations, which could be viewed as an important development in the efforts to rehabilitate Iraq within the ranks of the international community and lift the embargo.

In the first such comment, the newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH, which speaks for the government, says that the drafting of an unofficial paper between the two sides is a positive step that evokes optimism. The political dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations is aimed to reach an official agreement on the "unofficial paper" or the draft executive plan agreed on by the two sides to the technical talks.

The optimistic international statements that supported the start of the dialogue and the favorable climate that dominated the talks coincided with statements by specialized economic and oil quarters highlighting the importance of Iraq's imminent return to the international oil market after more than a five-year temporary absence.

The British newspaper THE FINANCIAL TIMES quoted UN diplomats as saying that "if Iraq and the United Nations agree on the sale of oil in exchange for food purchases, it will be difficult if not impossible to halt Iraqi oil exports again."

This view is in line with the belief of oil experts that Iraq is floating on an oil lake.

It should be recalled that His Excellency President Saddam Husayn said in the early 1970's that one of the last two barrels of oil to be exported will be Iraqi.

Iraq: Al-Mukhtar Says UN Dialogue 'Nearing the Awaited End'

JN2502124396 Baghdad INA in English
1143 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb. 25, INA — An Iraqi daily has said the Iraq-U.N. dialogue is on the right and normal track and is nearing the awaited end.

In an editorial on Sunday by editor Salah al-Mukhtar, AL-JUMHURIYAH said the dialogue has now moved to the political level, a thing which requires a pause to enable the two parties to study the joint understanding paper and to take the required official decisions before holding the next session of dialogue.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz on Tuesday [20 February] told INA that both delegations will report on what has been achieved so far in the talks.

Israel: Jerusalem Bus Attack, Casualties Reported

TA2502054596 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0530 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A severe attack in Jerusalem this morning — so far we know of more than 10 dead. One figure mentions at least 15 and perhaps even more deaths. So far, 30 injured persons have reached three hospitals in Jerusalem. The explosion occurred in the back part of bus No. 18 driving toward the Jerusalem central bus station. Another bus passing nearby, No. 36, was also damaged. Most of the casualties occurred on the No. 18 bus. Only a few persons from this bus walked away uninjured. Several vehicles and passersby were also hurt by the bombing. To repeat: Approximately 15 persons were killed, and at least 30 persons were taken to hospitals.

Israel: Hamas Claims Responsibility for Jerusalem Attack

TA2502075196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0730 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Report by Yoni Ben-Menahem]

[FBIS Translated Text] An unidentified person — an Arab speaking Arabic — called Qol Yisra'el's Arabic Department and announced that the attack in Jerusalem was a reaction to the Cave of the Patriarchs attack which was carried out two years ago to the day. Today also marks 50 days since the killing of Yahya 'Ayyash, the Engineer. The unidentified person stated that the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam battalions [military wing of Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas] are assuming responsibility for the attack.

Meanwhile, Yasir 'Arafat has ordered the highest alert in all Palestinian Police units in the autonomy areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. 'Arafat is extremely angry. His adviser Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi phoned him and updated him about the two attacks in Ashqelon and Jerusalem this morning. 'Arafat, who is extremely angry, will issue an official reaction later.

The Israeli security elements believe that the two attacks were coordinated and were aimed at surprising Israel at two places simultaneously. I believe that we will hear more about the identity of the Ashqelon attack perpetrators later today.

Israel: 'Terror' Attack Reported in Ashqelon; 10 Persons Wounded

TA2502055996 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0545 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Several minutes ago an explosion was heard in Ashqelon. Our correspondent Yosi Asulin reports from the site:

[Asulin] From reports I am receiving at this very minute, it appears that we are dealing here with another terror attack. We are dealing here with an explosion at a bus station. So far, we know of 10 wounded persons, eight of them in very serious condition. Security forces are on their way to the site.

Israel: Closure Imposed on Territories; 'Arafat Visit Canceled

TA2502061996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A complete closure has been imposed on Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip in the wake of the Jerusalem attack. This was reported by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman.

In the wake of the attack, Israel canceled 'Arafat's planned visit to Nabulus at noon today.

Israel: Peres on Bomb Attacks; Contacts With Palestinians Suspended

TA2502072796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0630 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by correspondent Arye Golan; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Golan] We have Prime Minister Shim'on Peres on the line. Shalom, sir:

[Peres] Shalom. These are very difficult moments in which the hearts of the entire nation, my heart, go out to the families of the victims and to the wounded. We all pray for the recovery of the wounded. Our struggle against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad terrorism is long, difficult, and painful. I have no doubts that we will win this struggle, although unfortunately this entails victims. This will be an uncompromising struggle which includes heartbreaking and extremely difficult moments, such as that we have witnessed this morning. However, it will not stop for a minute. We will harness all the necessary means, we will not spare any efforts to continue chasing and striking at terrorism and its leaders and branches wherever we find them, without hesitating and without stopping.

Painful as it is, terrorism will not determine our fate, and we will place no restrictions on pursuing the terrorists, those who send them, and their hiding places.

I ordered a closure on the West Bank and Gaza and the Jerusalem environs. I demanded that the head of the Palestinian Authority take determined steps to curb Hamas and Islamic Jihad activity, at both their bases and branches.

The government, together with the security elements, will convene this morning to discuss additional steps to be taken.

[Golan] Mr. Peres, in light of these attacks, do you not have any second thoughts regarding the agreements we have reached with the Palestinians?

[Peres] I have no doubts that even without these agreements such terror acts would have occurred. In the past we had such attacks, perhaps of an even more severe nature and more numerous.

[Golan] We signed the agreements, however, in order to put an end to such attacks. They have not ended, however.

[Peres] We signed agreements. Terrorism was partly stopped, partly not. Just as the PLO has stopped its terror activity, we must make sure that Hamas and Islamic Jihad stop their terror activity. The problem is that we are dealing here with suicide terrorists, and as you know, it takes no more than one or several individuals to cause such severe damage. We will not stop our struggle, however.

[Golan] Would you say that the Palestinian side is doing enough to fight Hamas and Islamic Jihad?

[Peres] Look, I do not want to hand out grades. They are acting, but I expect them to do more.

[Golan] The late Yitzhaq Rabin spoke about a separation. You are not speaking about a separation; instead, you want us to continue living together. The question is: Is this feasible?

[Peres] No, no. These are fairy tales. There is no difference between Yitzhaq's perception and mine. What does this separation issue mean? Jerusalem is a mixed city. Is it possible to work out a separation in it? There are no differences of opinion, but this is not the time to carry out such a discussion.

[Golan] Do you plan to visit the explosion site?

[Peres] You will hear about it later today.

[Golan] I understand you cannot say more for security reasons.

[Peres] Correct.

[Golan] Do you have any intention to speak with Yasir 'Arafat, to reprimand him or to prod him?

[Peres] I have already told you that I contacted him.

[Golan] What did he say?

[Peres] I am waiting for his answer. My message was just relayed to him. I did not contact him directly, but rather through the channels by which we relay messages.

[Golan] Can I understand that at this point we are not suspending any contacts and negotiations with the Palestinian side?

[Peres] Look, I will announce what has to be announced. I do not think we should discuss all the measures at this stage.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0710 GMT on 25 February includes a live report by political correspondent Shlomo Raz adding: "During the cabinet session that ended a few minutes ago — before Prime Minister Peres arrived at the explosion site — it was announced that all contacts with the Palestinians are being suspended. The prime minister ordered Major General Oren Shahor to immediately stop all contacts with the Palestinians."]

Israel: Further on Jerusalem, Ashqelon Bomb Attacks; Casualty Figures

TA2502083996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Officials in Jerusalem and Ashqelon are currently making great efforts to identify the victims of the two attacks. So far it is known that 20 people were killed and 73 wounded in the two attacks. The attack in Jerusalem was carried out on the No. 18 bus on its way from Qatamon to the central bus station. The explosion occurred on Yafo Street, not far from the central bus station. The bus was packed with passengers, and many of them were wounded. In this attack, approximately 20 persons were killed and 49 were wounded. Some 22 of those wounded in the Jerusalem attack are hospitalized in the Sha'arey Tzedeq Hospital; 19 in Hadassah-'En Kerem; five in Hadassah-Mount Scopus, and three in Biqur Holim. Approximately 10 of those wounded in the Jerusalem attack are in serious condition. The Labor and Social Welfare Ministry's Jerusalem District set up an emergency center to treat the families of the Jerusalem attack casualties.

In the Ashqelon explosion, two persons were killed and 24 were wounded. Our correspondent Nisim Qeynan reports that the security personnel are investigating whether there is a third casualty in Ashqelon, and if so, whether he is the terrorist who detonated the bomb. The explosion occurred at approximately 0730 at a hitchhiking station at the Ashqelon junction. Approximately half of the 24 persons were seriously wounded. All of the wounded were transferred to a Ashqelon hospital.

Israel: Death Toll Reaches 23 in Jerusalem Attack, 2 in Ashqelon Attack

TA2502095296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Twenty-five persons were killed in the Jerusalem and Ashqelon attacks this morning, and 80 were wounded. Great efforts are being made to identify the dead. In Jerusalem, 23 persons were killed and almost 50 were wounded. [passage omitted]

In the Ashqelon hitchhiking station attack, two persons were killed and 31 were wounded. [passage omitted]

Israel: Netanyahu: 'Time for Unity,' Not 'Political Bickering'

TA2502084696 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0830 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Report by Netan'el Semrik from Metzudat Ze'ev in Tel Aviv]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Likud political forum is holding its first meeting in the wake of the attack. In a short statement for the media at the opening of the meeting, Binyamin Netanyahu said that this is a time for unity rather than political bickering. The forum members paid respect to the victims by standing in silence for one minute. So it appears that at least for the moment, the Likud has decided to adopt a line of no reaction to the attacks.

Israel: Political Reaction to Bomb Attacks Reported

TA2502094296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tzomet leader Knesset Member [MK] Refa'el Eytan says the attack is the Palestinians' answer to the Israeli Government's capitulation in the issue of the closure on the territories. Moledet Chairman Rehav'am Ze'evi says the illusion that Yasir 'Arafat will prevent terror attacks has been shattered.

Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the National Religious Party faction called on the parties and MK's to show restraint at this hour and to avoid outworn reactions. The Third Way movement demands the imposition of a permanent and complete closure between the autonomy areas and Israel. The Israeli Arab Follow-Up Committee also denounces the attacks.

Israel: Cabinet Session Ends; Ministers Demand 'Indefinite Closure'

TA2502111796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Talk between anchor Karmit Gay and political correspondent Shlomo Raz at the Prime Minister's Office — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Gay] Shlomo, has the cabinet session ended?

[Raz] Yes, the session just ended. It dealt almost exclusively with the terrible attack this morning. Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq, Shin Bet chief 'Ami Ayalon, and senior police officers briefed the ministers on the attack. Particularly interesting was the briefing by the head of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch Research Department. Brigadier General 'Amidror reiterated that the Palestinian Authority [PA] is not harming the terrorists' infrastructures, and that therefore, this extremist Islamic terrorism occasionally raises its terrible head. This is not the first time that such things have been said, but on this occasion, they seem to have their correct perspective. 'Amidror said that the PA is detaining those suspected of terrorism, but that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] persons in particular are being released after a while. According to the as yet unofficial information, Hamas' 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam members are responsible for the attack. The prime minister this morning imposed a closure on the territories. Several of the ministers demanded that the closure be indefinite in nature, and at this point the closure is indeed defined as indefinite.

[Gay] Shlomo, was it indeed decided to suspend the talks with the Palestinians until more serious steps are taken against Hamas?

[Raz] Certainly. The prime minister informed Major General Oren Shahor, coordinator of activities in the territories, that all contacts between Israel and the PA are immediately suspended. There are no contacts between Israel and the Palestinians. This message was passed to Shahor in an unequivocal manner, and he passed it on to the Palestinians. The prime minister himself spoke with PA chairman Yasir 'Arafat and demanded that he start fighting against the terror infrastructure rather than settling for trying to deal with occasional terror acts.

Minister Amnon Rubinstein has been saying for the last several years that a complete closure should be imposed on the territories and that a clear-cut and formal geographic separation be worked out between Israel and the territories. Minister Rubinstein said in the cabinet session that whenever a closure has been imposed on the territories no terror attacks have been carried out, except for one case two years ago in Hadera on the eve of Independence Day. Minister Rubinstein draws the conclusion that a permanent closure must be imposed on the territories.

Israel: Peres Holds News Conference on 'Terror' Attacks

TA2502130696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1050 GMT 25 Feb 96

[News conference with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq, and Jerusalem District Police Commander Arye 'Amit at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem following the cabinet meeting — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Peres] This is undoubtedly a painful day and a very hard hour for all of us, for all residents and citizens of our country, for all peace seekers, for all security personnel. Our heart is now primarily with the bereaved families that are currently undergoing unbearable moments. Our prayers are with the injured, some of whom are fighting for their lives now. I am hopeful that anybody who can be saved will be.

We know that this is a cruel war. We have no intention of giving in to Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], no intention of being taken aback by the Islamic Jihad either. We know that there are vulnerabilities in every war. The weak spot in this struggle is mainly the suicide attackers. We also know that we are only half way there; the peace process has not been completed yet. The destruction of the nests of terrorists is not over yet, but this is no reason to stop this double struggle against terror on the one hand, and for a dialogue of peace on the other. We are acting to enlist all security means and personnel at our disposal. We have adopted self-evident measures such as a continuation or rather the reimposition of the closure of the territories, very meticulous checks at the border crossings, and a reinforcement of units. These measures have been taken and will be taken in the future too. This morning we received numerous condolences from the Arab side too, including President Mubarak, King Husayn, Prince Hasan, and Jordanian Prime Minister al-Kabariti. The first to call and extend his condolences was Yasir 'Arafat, the head of the Palestinian Authority [PA].

I would like to say that according to our assessment, the PA is indeed fighting terror, and has undoubtedly foiled several terror attacks aimed at Israel. We appreciate this. At the same time, we demand that the anti-Hamas and anti-Islamic Jihad action be stepped up immediately and unhesitatingly. 'Arafat promised me that he would begin action at once. We gave him several pointers too, and indeed, I was told that arrests had begun in the Gaza Strip this morning.

President Clinton, too, as well as U.S. Secretary of State Christopher, relayed condolences through their ambassador in Israel. For our part, we know that we do not yet have all the necessary solutions for the suicide attackers' problem, but the antiterror war in itself has yielded results. The cooperation with all opponents of terror have also yielded results. Consequently, we had had almost seven months without very serious terror acts. The suicide problem is world wide, it takes place in many capitals around the world, and I believe that a solution will finally be found for it too, although it is taking more time than we would like.

The pain is unbearable, the number of victims is large, and the mourning is deep, and there is no reason to hide the mourning, the sorrow, and the grief, not only of the bereaved families but also that of the entire Israeli nation and all supporters of peace. Still, as I have just stated, despite the great difficulty, despite the heavy heart, we will continue to pursue the double road of fighting terror, of fighting the opponents of peace and those who want to harm Israel on the one hand, and of continuing to pave the road for a comprehensive and permanent peace on the other. Those who wanted to harm us did not want to harm a policy, or an idea, or some of the people; they wanted to harm the entire nation. I also have high regard for the appearance of the opposition leader on this matter. Mr. Netanyahu understood that at this difficult moment we should stand united against all those who want to hit us all, regardless of which party we belong to, or what idea or policy we subscribe to. We will cope with the suffering and continue to walk on the only path to which there is no alternative.

I am here with the chief of staff and the Jerusalem District police commander who experienced a very hard morning today, and not for the first time either. If we can enrich you with information, we would do so willingly.

[Israel Television Channel 1's Shlomi Eldar] Sir, our question has to do with the lifting of the closure. The closure on the territories had been imposed in the wake of rather consistent intelligence information to prevent terrorist attacks planned by the Palestinians. We hear that today the Palestinians are marking the second anniversary of the massacre in the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. Was this fact taken into consideration when the closure was lifted? Is Minister Shahal's separation plan once again being considered?

[Peres] The chief of staff has just handed me the first casualty toll. In Jerusalem we had 22 dead and 49 wounded, while in Ashqelon we had two killed and 29 wounded, which brings the casualty toll to a total of 24 dead and 78 wounded.

[Shahaq] Hamas announced that it had perpetrated the two attacks today to mark the second anniversary of the events in the Cave of the Patriarchs. They do not lack for dates or reasons. We operate on the basis of existing information and early warning, and our considerations are based on existing facts.

Hamas does not lack for dates. Today it was the 50th day [since the killing of Yahya 'Ayyash], although anniversaries are usually marked on the 40th day. It could not do it on the 40th day, so it did it on the 50th day. I suppose that if it had not worked out on the 50th day, it would have cited the 60th day or would have looked for another date. Hamas does not need excuses; it has vowed to go on operating against us, and we saw it operating against us today in Jerusalem and Ashqelon. Our war against it does not hinge on any anniversary or date, and it is a relentless one. In my opinion, its attempts to stage terror attacks will continue as long as it can stage attacks. It does not need excuses, nor does it wait for any special date, but for a place and time when it can strike.

[Jerusalem Television Channel 2's 'Imanu'el Rosen] Mr. Prime Minister, several cabinet ministers proposed today to impose an indefinite closure on the territories, either for six months or indefinitely. Do you favor such a prolonged closure?

[Peres] We have imposed a closure, and we did not announce how long it will remain in effect. I do not think that today is the right day to talk about the duration and nature of the closure. This should be discussed on a day when there is more levelheadedness, because all of us, by the nature of things, are very emotional. Therefore, seeing that a closure is in effect at the moment, there is no need for any additional decision beyond that. I proposed and promised to hold an orderly debate about the policy of closures, but it will not be held in the immediate context of the two terrorist attacks staged today.

[Qol Yisra'el's Shlomo Raz] Mr. Prime Minister, professional elements — such as Brigadier General 'Amidror, head of the Intelligence Branch's Research Department — have told the cabinet that 'Arafat is not fighting the terrorist infrastructure. How does this square with your assertion that 'Arafa?} is trying to cope with the terror?

[Peres] He did not say it in such absolute terms. There is no contradiction between what I say and he says. On the one hand, 'Arafat has thwarted attempted terrorist attacks in Israel and arrested people; the Palestinian Police killed two prominent terrorists in the Gaza Strip in a direct clash and made arrests. We believe that he should enhance his activities against Hamas, and we have relayed this demand to him in the clearest terms.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio's Udi Segal] Mr. Prime Minister, you said 'Arafat knows the names of terrorists in his territory. Is this an orderly list given by the Shin Bet to 'Arafat in recent weeks? Who are the terrorists in question? Has 'Arafat acceded to our demand to arrest these people?

[Peres] We are talking about an orderly list. We know that 'Arafat tried to track them down. In some cases, at least, he did not succeed. We did not always succeed either.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, did the cabinet decide to suspend the talks with the Palestinians until after the funerals? Will today's attacks in Ashqelon and Jerusalem accelerate the decision about orderly arrangements for crossing into Israel and Minister Shahal's separation plan?

[Peres] As far as the suspension of the talks — the talks, not the contacts — is concerned, it has always been the custom not to hold political negotiations while funerals are taking place, and we will proceed accordingly this time as well.

As for the dividing line, this is a separate issue which calls for a debate, because the problem in Jerusalem is different from that in other places. Also, the question of a dividing line does not exist near Ashqelon, as there is a dividing line there. Therefore, we will also discuss this issue in an orderly manner. We held our first session on Friday and, as has already been reported in the press, we decided to allocate 20 million shekels to strengthen the security situation in 78 settlements. We will also hold an orderly debate on the dividing line.

[Raz] Mr. Peres, you said the policy will remain unchanged. I would like to ask you a more specific question.

[Peres] I said that we will continue our policy, which consists of relentlessly fighting terror on one hand and pursuing the peace process on the other.

[Raz] What about the evacuation of Hebron and the redeployment in the Hebron area?

[Peres] I do not think that any decision that exceeds what is needed or possible should be made on a day like today. We said we would honor all agreements and dates, and our position has not changed.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, how long do you think the freeze in the talks and the suspension of the contacts with the Palestinians will continue? Another question, with your permission: How did the meeting with the bereaved parents, which you held prior to this news conference, help you?

[Peres] Regarding your first question, I repeat: until all the victims are laid to rest.

As for the meeting with the bereaved parents, I am also entitled to be emotional. Such meetings are very, very emotional, because every word that is said comes out of the deepest pain a person can experience and is, therefore, of the highest sincerity possible. The bereaved parents called on me today, at this painful time, when they themselves have not yet found solace for their personal pain, and told me: Go on this way; pursue this path; do not be deterred despite the pain. One woman who lost her husband in Argentina told me that her son takes the No. 5 bus [Tel Aviv bus line bombed in a suicide attack in October 1994] and will continue to do so, and said that nobody will disrupt our lives or prevent us from living as we need and must live. Other speakers were also very touching.

[Segal] Mr. Peres, with your permission, I would like to address a question to Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq regarding the people responsible for today's attacks. Is it clear at this stage that the two attacks were coordinated and synchronized by Hamas? Has Hamas graduated to a higher level? Do we know who is behind the attacks? What is being done in this regard?

[Shahaq] At this point in time, I cannot make any absolute or indisputable assertions. By the nature of things, the facts must be checked. There is a bizarre coincidence between the two events, and there is a bizarre similarity between the explosives and everything surrounding them. Therefore, on the face of it, there would seem to be some kind of connection, but I cannot say that for certain. I would like to remind you that one morning in April 1995, there were two suicide attacks involving car bombs in the Gaza Strip — one in Kfar Darom and the second on the way to Netzarim — but even today I cannot point to a sure connection between the two. Therefore, we will check everything. Regardless of whether there is a connection between them, each of these two attacks is enough on its own merit, and the connection between them does not constitute any higher level or strength. I do not know what a new level means. Unfortunately, we have experienced similar attacks on more than one occasion in recent years. This level is high enough to all intents and purposes, and there is no need for a higher one. I suppose that we will learn more details as time goes by and that we will not find anything new or dramatic that we did not see in previous attacks, either in terms of the perpetrators, their superiors, or the methods.

[Rosen] Mr. Chief of Staff, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] usually took certain measures after such attacks, but today we have a new deployment in the territories. Do you feel that your hands are tied and that you cannot do all you would like to do in the wake of these two events?

[Shahaq] I always propose to do whatever can be done before rather than after attacks. Unfortunately, this is not the first attack. Attacks were launched from Gaza even after we handed over responsibility for Gaza to the PA, and in my opinion, this is nothing new either. Our struggle must be persistent and relentless. The fight against terror is not waged after an attack but all the time, everywhere, and with every means possible. We — not just the IDF alone but other elements in Israel — will continue this fight. The PA, too, must persevere in its actions against terror. The war hinges on perseverance. Anyone who fights terror in spurts, before or after attacks, will simply fail in the long run.

[Raz] Mr. Prime Minister, you informed the cabinet and, I believe, also the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee about two or four terrorist squads preparing to stage attacks. Do you have any other specific warnings, and if so, what else is needed in addition to the closure?

[Peres] The information we have is not for public dissemination, and we act in accordance with it. When this information pertains to the Palestinian side, we give it to them, but I will not elaborate on this issue.

[Segal] Mr. Peres, don't you think that in the wake of the attacks, there are grounds to postpone the evacuation of Hebron in view of the sensitivity this city carries for both the Arab and Jewish sides?

[Peres] Today we will discuss only what is necessary to deal with this serious event and will not start looking into other processes and dates. A priori, I only want to say that I believe we will abide by all the commitments we undertook and that neither Hamas nor anybody else will make us budge, just as nobody will prevent us from acting against Hamas with all the means and ways possible before, during, and after [not further specified].

[Segal] A question to Commander 'Amit: Our sad experience in the past shows that after almost every serious attack, we witnessed big demonstrations in Jerusalem and elsewhere. Will the police allow demonstrations today, and how are you preparing?

['Amit] First of all, a word of gratitude to the citizens of Jerusalem, who have kept relatively calm so far. There were a few thousand people at the site of the attack but, except for the usual cursing and shouting at the policemen and setting a tire on fire, they behaved in an adult and calm manner.

Right-wing people have already asked us for permission to hold a protest vigil and light candles at the scene of the attack this evening, and we will certainly allow them. We hope the adult behavior will continue this evening. In any event, we are preparing to deploy very large troops in those places where we know from past experience that people try to riot. I very much hope this evening will end peacefully.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, you expressed your appreciation to the head of the opposition for his statements about the need for internal unity. Do you nevertheless think that what happened this morning in Jerusalem and Ashqelon will hurt Labor's chances in the elections?

[Peres] Believe me, that is the last question you should have asked today, and I am in no state of mind to answer it.

Israel: Baraq Demands More Action From PA Following Attacks

TA2502160996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1405 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by anchorman Yoram Ronen; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ronen] According to a statement you issued shortly after today's terrorist attack, you feel a linkage should be established between 'Arafat's compliance with the demand to arrest all known terrorists and their leaders and the overall relationship between Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA]. In other words, you believe that perhaps our talks with him should be suspended for a few days until 'Arafat provides such a commitment.

[Baraq] The problem is not one of commitment but of action. What we demand is more action and more results from the PA, as part of a range of measures. We imposed a closure today on both Judaea and Samaria and on Gaza. The closure, at this stage, remains indefinite. The security committee on Jerusalem will convene today to discuss which steps can be adopted to bolster security in the city. I also summoned a meeting of the ambassadors of the PA's donor countries to convey to them our position that anybody who assists the Palestinians must demand that they make a supreme effort to abide by their commitments.

[Ronen] Do you think Yasir 'Arafat can track down suicide terrorists before they set out on attacks?

[Baraq] There is no 100 percent in the fight against terror. There was no 100 percent even when we controlled the entire territory or in areas that have always been under our control. Incidentally, 'Arafat has done some things, especially lately. At the same time, we expect him to deal methodically with infrastructures, persons, and groups wherever he knows of their existence. Such actions, combined with our efforts, will result in largely reducing the likelihood of serious attacks such as we witnessed today.

[Ronen] It transpires from your words that there is good reason to assume that the two suicide operators who blew themselves up today started out from within the boundaries of the PA.

[Baraq] I suppose they are members of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], but I do not know where they came from. We will have to wait and see about that.

This must be a joint effort; I am not putting the ball in 'Arafat's court. The PA must do its part, while we do what we have to do. In other words, we must eradicate this phenomenon through a joint effort. Incidentally, I am convinced that we will ultimately win this struggle. Unfortunately, however, there will be a bloody price along the way.

[Ronen] Were you the chief of staff today, you would supposedly say that it is very hard to operate against suicide terrorists.

[Baraq] Suicide terrorists are a very problematic phenomenon, which was not engendered by the political process. It started in the context of our war against terror in Lebanon in the wake of the Peace for Galilee war. This kind of terror is very hard to track down. It is very hard to stop an individual terrorist who sets out to perpetrate an attack. It is imperative, however, that both Israel and the Palestinians act against the overall terrorist infrastructure all the time. I would say that the swamp where these lethal mosquitoes breed is the issue the peace process has been trying to solve gradually, even if it takes time.

[Ronen] When you say overall infrastructure, you mean the infrastructure of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad.

[Baraq] I mean their terrorist infrastructure. Both have a political organization against which we cannot do much as long as it does not engage, order, or support terror; however, there is a terrorist organization there which should be the target of far more determined and relentless treatment.

[Ronen] In a broader sense, do you think today's attacks will adversely affect the peace process with the Palestinians?

[Baraq] They have a certain potential to do that. There is no doubt that the attacks are perpetrated by opponents of the peace process. I very much hope, however, that the unity of the Israeli people rallying around the struggle against terror — as evidenced today in the public reactions across the political spectrum — and the joint interest we share with 'Arafat to control this phenomenon will make both the peace process and the fight against terror continue.

[Ronen] In other words, will the talks with the Palestinians and all the target dates we set, including the evacuation of Hebron, continue as planned?

[Baraq] I am against discussing this subject at the moment. At the moment we have suspended it — not on a whim — and when the time comes, we will have to see about it. At the moment, it has been suspended.

[Ronen] Until the end of the mourning period.

[Baraq] At least.

[Ronen] Thank you very much, Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq.

[Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew at 1425 GMT on 25 February carries a live interview in the studio with Baraq by anchorman Hayim Yavin and political correspondent Nisim Mish'al. Asked to comment on a purported difference between his position and that of Prime Minister Shim'on Peres about linking negotiations with the Palestinians to 'Arafat's fighting terror, the foreign minister replies: "Believe me, I see the pictures you have been showing from the hospitals, and I tell you: Leave this issue alone. In my opinion, there is no difference between myself and Shim'on Peres. Both of us want to see 'Arafat abide by his commitments and fight terror with all his might; both of us want to see the peace process continue alongside that fight."

[Asked to elaborate on the kind of linkage he is talking about, Baraq replies: "I am talking about a linkage that exists naturally. Even if you, I, and all of us said there was no linkage, connection, or effect — regardless of how many car bombs explode in our streets, how many people are killed, and how many innocent civilians and women are hurt — there clearly is an effect."

[Asked whether he would suspend the negotiations with the Palestinians indefinitely until there are results in the field with regard to the Hamas infrastructure, the foreign minister replies: "No, I believe that would be a mistake."]

Israel: Former Shin Bet Head on PA's Role in Preventing Attacks

TA2502170696 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1645 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Interview with former Israeli Shin Bet head Karmi Gilon by Ehud Ya'ari in the studio on 25 February — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Former Shin Bet head Karmi Gilon said that it is very reasonable to assume that the two terrorist attacks today were coordinated. Therefore, terrorism has jumped a rung. He said the Palestinian Authority [PA] is not dealing with the terrorism infrastructure. Our correspondent Ehud Ya'ari interviewed the former Shin Bet head:

[Begin recording] [Gilon] First, a closure does not hermetically prevent terrorism, which is something we must understand. It is true that there were very few — if any — attacks during closures, but they cannot be hermetic. The boundary between Judaea and Samaria and the Green Line is open, not to mention Jerusalem, which is open in all directions and where many Palestinians reside. We can impose an effective closure on the Gaza Strip, but we must remember one thing: A determined terrorist who decides to carry out an attack will get through the closure and act. What does the closure provide? It facilitates routine security by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the police, especially inside the Green Line, as Palestinians are prevented from moving around freely and anything unusual stands out. For instance, a Palestinian moving around in West Jerusalem during a closure will draw more attention than if thousands of Palestinians are working in Israel. That is the benefit of a closure. I do not know why the closure was lifted.

[Ya'ari] Is it true that the transfer of territories to the PA harmed the Shin Bet's ability to conduct pursuits, carry out stakeouts, and provide early warning?

[Gilon] Definitely. Our ability to act was built over the years on the basis of coordinated activities by the IDF, the Civil Administration, and the Shin Bet in the territories. That capability no longer exists. We developed other means to try to attain vital intelligence on the basis of which we will be able to continue to thwart attacks, albeit through completely different means.

[Ya'ari] Is there reason to believe that sufficient political pressure — for example, by suspending the negotiations and postponing the IDF withdrawal from Hebron's Arab suburbs — can be effective in getting Yasir 'Arafat to act against the terrorist infrastructure?

[Gilon] In my view, yes. The activity being carried out at the moment is an outcome of the PA's understanding — especially that of its security forces — that if they do not prevent terrorism, the entire political process is endangered. We must remember that Fatah has abandoned terrorism, which contributed to a 70-percent reduction in terrorist attacks between 1994 and 1995. The quality of terrorism is what is so terrible. The number of dead and wounded as a result of suicide attacks, even if small in number — eight last year — causes enormous damage to the State of Israel. Therefore, we must pressure them to understand that they must deal with the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam leaders and impair the terrorist infrastructure. [end recording]

Israel: Netanyahu Vows Full Support If Government Takes 'Tough' Steps

TA2502171796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu has banned his Young Guard from holding protest demonstrations during the mourning period. Our correspondent Yoram Ronen interviewed Netanyahu:

[Begin recording] [Netanyahu] If the government takes clear-cut and tough steps against terrorism, I promise you that it will receive the full support of the opposition even during its current term. I think we must take a different path, a responsible path that assures security while advancing toward peace. But I prefer not to get into that argument. There are currently two things on the agenda: participation in the mourning of dozens of families in Israel, and a shared desire to achieve peace and security for all the citizens of Israel.

[Ronen] I understand that the Likud will not initiate protest demonstrations at the site of the terrorist attack.

[Netanyahu] You should understand this differently, because I barred the Likud Young Guard — as they are usually the ones who demonstrate — from demonstrating in the next two days, which are days of national mourning.

[Ronen] In other words, your reaction will come only after the funerals.

[Netanyahu] That is correct.

[Ronen] As somebody who dealt with terrorism, I would like to ask you if you believe that there is any solution to suicide bombings, as it is difficult to prevent such actions.

[Netanyahu] There is no absolute solution, but we can significantly reduce terrorism in general and this phenomenon in particular. We must understand that the suicide bombers are dispatched by people who want to live. They want to send others to commit suicide, but the last thing those who instigate, organize, assign, and arm want is to die. We have all the means — security, political, and intelligence — to use against those who want to kill us, even if they are prepared to commit suicide. I would very much hope that the government will adopt those measures and, if it does, it will receive our complete and total support. [end recording]

Israel: Peres Holds Consultations; Baraq To Relay Demand to 'Arafat

TA2502202296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres conferred with Ministers Ehud Baraq and Hayim Ramon tonight on the political repercussions of today's terrorist attacks. Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq will convene the ambassadors of the donor states to the Palestinian Authority on 26 February in order to relay to 'Arafat through them a demand that he act against the terrorist infrastructure with greater determination. He told our correspondent Shlomo Raz that this demand is sanctioned by the Oslo accords.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 25 February adds that prior to the consultations with the two senior ministers, "the prime minister held a special security meeting with the participation of Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq, Shin Bet head 'Ami Ayalon, and Major General Dani Yatom. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the participants discussed the steps that need to be taken following the attacks. Prior to the meeting, the chief of staff convened several senior officers, including Maj. Gen. Ilan Biran, commander of the Central Command."]

Israel: Labor Leader: Bomb Not To Jeopardize Election Prospects

LD2502212096 Paris France-2 Television Network in French 1900 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Interview with Nisim Zvili, secretary general of the Israeli Labor Party, by Charles Enderlin in Jerusalem and Bruno Masure in the studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Masure] With us live from Jerusalem is our permanent correspondent, Charles Enderlin, joined by Nisim Zvili, the secretary general of the Israeli Labor Party. [passage omitted] Good evening, Mr. Zvili.

[Zvili] Good evening.

[Masure] The first question is that we are three months away from general elections in Israel. The head of the right-wing opposition today refused to exploit political capital out of what he termed a national catastrophe, but having said that this series of attacks is a nightmare for Shim'on Peres. Does it not risk jeopardizing a victory for the Labor Party?

[Zvili] This is a terrible day for the country of Israel and for Israeli society. Everyone shares in the pain, the grief, and the anger felt by the victims' families — by all the inhabitants of Israel. But I do not think one can create a concrete link between the fight against terrorism and the forthcoming elections. We are going to continue in this struggle. It is a difficult struggle; we know there are still many obstacles to surmount before we can arrive at a peace agreement, but I think the aim of these terrorist acts is very precise: it is not simply about murdering Jews, it is above all about blowing apart the peace process. Their greatest victory will be won if this peace process comes to a complete halt.

[Enderlin] But perhaps tonight you have already lost the elections?

[Zvili] Look, the Israeli people are a very intelligent people, very rational, and they know we are going through and will go through very difficult times, as all the inhabitants of the state of Israel are experiencing very emotional reactions, even those who support the peace process.

We are going to reflect on this and choose between any possible alternatives in order to resolve the existing problem, to find a real solution. Those who are ready to think a little deeply, those who are ready to think towards the future, know that there is only one solution — that is to achieve a state of peace between ourselves and the Palestinians. There are no other solutions to use to fight against this terrorism.

Israel: Closure To Be Extended; More Closures in Future

TA2602062096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Police sources are criticizing the decision to lift the closure last week without the usual, proper consultation. Our correspondent Aviv Bushinsky has learned that following information regarding hostile activity in Gaza, last Saturday the Shin Bet chief asked to continue the closure, but the prime minister preferred the position of the army, which asked to lift the closure due to the great pressure put on its forces. Minister Shahal yesterday made it clear that he does not share this criticism, because there is no indication that the suicide terrorists yesterday came from the autonomy areas, and it cannot be ensured that there will be no attacks during a closure.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that in the consultations held yesterday by the prime minister and the top security echelons, it was decided that the closure on the territories will be of an extended nature. It was also decided that in the future, a closure will be imposed whenever there is even a slight fear of attacks or preparations for attacks. Moreover, a closure will be imposed in anticipation of holidays in the next few months. Generally speaking, henceforth, the decision to impose a closure will be quicker and more urgent than in the past. The considerations for lifting the closure will also be more stringent and will be made in a proper manner.

Israel: Shahal on Indefinite Closure, Providing Security

TA2602062596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal this morning told Qol Yisra'el that an indefinite closure actually constitutes the separation between the Israelis and the Palestinians of which the late Yitzhaq Rabin spoke. Shahal said that with all due respect, we do not have to provide for the Palestinians' existence. Let the countries of the world take care of them. Shahal emphasized that the government's sole duty is to safeguard the security of the residents of Israel.

Israel: Decisionmaking Process on Lifting of Closure Detailed

TA2602094396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We have more details on the argument surrounding the lifting of the closure before yesterday's major attacks. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that at approximately midnight last Saturday [24 February], the Shin Bet chief proposed to seal off the Gaza Strip after reports were received by the Shin Bet about plans for an attack in Israel. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch possessed a different assessment on the basis of which the chief of staff proposed not to impose a closure but rather to conduct a thorough check on the passage of vehicles and persons from the Gaza Strip to Israel. The prime minister made his decision on the basis of the chief of staff's recommendation. No element suggested reimposing the closure on Judaea and Samaria last Saturday night.

Regarding the course of events since Monday, 12 February, when Prime Minister Peres decided to impose a closure on the territories, it was reported that during this period five consultations were held over the telephone by the relevant elements, with Dani Yatom, the prime minister's military adviser, coordinating the contacts. That Friday, a consultation was held at the prime minister's bureau in which the situation was reassessed. Minister Shahal and Commissioner Hefetz did not attend this consultation. The following Wednesday, the prime minister decided that in the absence of new intelligence information the closure would be lifted on Friday, 23 February. Intelligence elements and analysts maintained that the closure should be continued until Saturday night, but since only a few Arabs enter Israel from the territories on Fridays and Saturdays, the prime minister decided that the closure should be lifted on Friday.

Sources who are involved in the decisionmaking process surrounding the imposition of closures and the consultations that accompanied the last closure and its termination reject the claim that Moshe Shahal was not familiar with the decisions, seeing that the head of his operational headquarters, an officer bearing the rank of commander, was in the know.

Jordan: 'Text' of King Husayn AL-QABAS Interview

JN2502104396 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 25 Feb 96 pp 6-7

["Text" of interview with King Husayn of Jordan by Muhammad Jasim al-Saqr, chief editor of the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-QABAS, published by AL-QABAS on 24 February; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Saqr] On 17 February, His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, Kuwait's heir apparent and prime minister, announced the beginning of the normalization process between Kuwait and Jordan after a series of messages from His Highness Prince Hasan, your crown prince. Shaykh Sa'd indicated that Kuwait is awaiting the measures that the Jordanian authorities will take to translate these words into action for the good of the two countries. How is this normalization process proceeding? What are the expected measures in this regard?

[Husayn] I was extremely pleased to hear that. His Highness Shaykh Sa'd, the heir apparent, is a dear brother and an old friend. We were certain that at a particular stage, the causes of pain will disappear. They may not disappear altogether, but they will be eased by the love that used to exist between us and his highness. As the picture becomes clearer and the circumstances better, interests necessitate that we continue to work and build.

In fact, I was pleased to follow up those messages. Having been acquainted with his highness' latest message, I do not believe that there are conditions in the true sense of the word. There is a desire for openness that would lead to a new start on solid ground. We welcome this, for which we have always called. Normalization is a fact and a reality.

[Al-Saqr] Your majesty, how is the normalization process progressing?

[Husayn] I believe that it is on its way to becoming a fact and reality, God willing. The experiences through which we have passed have cost us and our brothers a great deal and pained us and them. These experiences put us a position that requires us to rebuild this relationship on firmer and lasting bases.

[Al-Saqr] Average Kuwaiti citizens consider Shaykh Sa'd's initiative a brave stand because there are many Kuwaitis who are still suffering from the devastating consequences of the Iraqi invasion and still remember the Jordanian support for Iraq. Does your majesty not believe that the Kuwaiti people are entitled to an explanation of your stand on the Iraqi invasion of 2 August 1990? Why did it take five years to change this stand?

[Husayn] They have the right to ask this question and we have the right to respond. If this requires us to repeat all that we had discussed and explained, I am ready and do not have any problem with that.

First, regarding the invasion itself, it was in fact a very painful surprise. We did not have any idea whatsoever about the Iraqi leadership's intention to carry out such an act. That impression was created by the outcome of Arab meetings then. This was reiterated by the Iraqi leadership in all summit and Arab League meetings. In other words, Iraq always advocated the inadmissibility of the use of weapons among Arabs and aggressions against brothers. Iraq always demanded a stand against any party that violated that equation. Therefore, I was surprised by what had happened. The surprise was extremely painful. Yet, we had felt that the situation needed everybody's caution and attention so that it would not reach that outcome, which we had never imagined. We demanded a dialogue and believed that the matter had to be addressed among the brothers. We were worried by the tension that had existed, which had called on us to do our utmost to render the Saudi Arabia [Iraqi-Kuwaiti] meeting successful so as to end the tense situation that existed then.

We never supported the occupation of Kuwait. We never supported the taking over of Kuwait nor any action whatsoever targeting Kuwait or any other sisterly Arab country. This is a principled stand. We always called for implementing Resolution 242 which stipulates the inadmissibility of occupying the lands of others by force. We adopted similar stands vis-a-vis other issues, like the Falkland and Cyprus issues. It is absolutely impossible that we adopt a contrary position on what happened.

We were taken by surprise. We wanted to be given a brief opportunity. The U.S. president at that time gave us 48 hours to try to work out a formula to ensure the withdrawal and the launching of a serious effort to settle the problem. We sought to carry out our duty within our utmost capability so that a solution would be reached among us as Arab brethren. However, we did not succeed. Then, it was necessary for us to take the appropriate stand. We believe that we were not given an opportunity. This is what indeed disturbed and pained us.

[Al-Saqr] Your Majesty, do you not think that Shaykh Sa'd's initiative now will open the road for real and frank discussion?

[Husayn] I think this is a very positive initiative and I am happy. I greet Shaykh Sa'd for adopting this position which I think is courageous and genuinely Arab. This is not something strange for my brother Shaykh Sa'd.

[Al-Saqr] I would like to go back to the 48-hour period between Cairo and Baghdad. You left Cairo, where you met with President Mubarak, for Baghdad. According to Muhammad Hasanin Haykal's [well known Egyptian journalist] account, which was denied by none, Saddam Husayn was not enthusiastic at the beginning to give you a paper on withdrawal. He said he was ready to withdraw within weeks. After you boarded the plane, he said he met with the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and agreed to withdrawal?

[Husayn] Regarding the issue of withdrawal, he told me that he needed some time to make a decision and that he must consult with the RCC. I insisted on knowing when the withdrawal would start and end. He told me that he would respond as soon as possible, then I boarded the plane.

[Al-Saqr] But, does Saddam need the RCC to make a decision while it is known that he makes decisions on his own? Are decisions made in a democratic way in Iraq? Or was he trying to escape making a decision?

[Husayn] That is what happened anyway.

[Al-Saqr] Then you were frustrated because the Egyptian Government issued a condemnation.

[Husayn] Of course, I was frustrated.

[Al-Saqr] There have been many reports during the Iraqi invasion that you had an indirect interest in the invasion so that you would contain any danger to you following the Iraqi-Iranian war and in order to end the stagnation of the Middle East settlement — a stagnation that threatened your ruling system.

[Husayn] There was absolutely no interest either direct or indirect. I was not with him. I did not speak to him. I tried to address the issue on the Arab level. However, I did not succeed. I do not think that my endeavor or attempt was wrong.

[Al-Saqr] These inquiries and explanations are necessary within the context of the frank discussion so that there will be a real reconciliation that will end the repercussions of the catastrophe in the region brought about by Saddam. Has this frank discussion between Jordan and Kuwait made any serious steps forward?

[Husayn] I think that we are at the beginning of the road. We are ready for a through examination and a fraternal and frank discussion of any issue raised by the brothers or by us on the basis on mutual respect and care for common interests and the future of this nation. I think that relations between the two countries have always been distinguished. I believe we have set our feet on the right track. We will not stop.

[Al-Saqr] We have been witnessing for months a new Jordanian stand toward the Iraqi regime. What caused this new stand?

[Husayn] The stand has changed gradually as a matter of fact.

[Al-Saqr] In fact Jordan had been very close to Iraq.

[Husayn] You have kindly asked me about the invasion of Kuwait as a whole and the dangers we were all destined to face. Directly before the war, I sent a letter to the Iraqi president — I will give you a copy because I do not believe it was sufficiently publicized — in which you will find that everything we had expected happened. Our advice was not heeded. That is the truth. From the moment of the invasion and from my first to my last meeting [with Saddam Husayn], I did the impossible to make things take another course, but eventually I was told: God is with us and we will triumph even if the entire universe is against us. I said that I could not view matters in this fashion and I left in pain and sorrow because I knew what would happen.

We all lost, sir, and we all suffered. We continued to wait for a rational approach that could lead to a beneficial result and until Iraq could emerge from its troubles. Iraq is important to us. Its unity, sovereignty, national cohesion, and stability are important to us. However, we waited in vain. We heard of the Iraqi people's suffering and we extended support, and we are still doing so, in terms of humanitarian and other channels although we knew that this would have only a limited effect in alleviating people's suffering.

However, we later discovered that there were conditions that nobody with a conscience could tolerate, both in terms of the imposed sanctions from abroad or the deprivation of the Iraqi people and denying them a decent life in the absence of democracy, human rights, and everything. Therefore, we had to take a stand. We have taken this stand because we have always been concerned for the Iraqi people, who are our people and brothers.

[Al-Saqr] Last August, you said that Saddam was actually thinking of another invasion of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Did you have confirmed information on this matter?

[Husayn] We acquired this information after the arrival of the Iraqi brothers and General Husayn Kamil in particular and we learned that there had been real intentions to mount a new operation.

[Al-Saqr] Can one be so reckless? Has Saddam not learned his lesson, judging by your knowledge of the man?

[Husayn] I really have not been able to ascertain the truth for a long time because my method of thinking is different from that of the Iraqi leadership. In any case, what use was the fresh troop concentrations on the Kuwait border four years after the first operation? What use was that to Iraq?

[Al-Saqr] It has only increased the determination of the people's of the Gulf to resist the Iraqi regime and to insist on implementing UN Security Council resolutions.

[Husayn] That is right.

[Al-Saqr] Your Majesty, you said on more than one occasion that you were desperate about a positive change in Baghdad. These statements escalated following Husayn Kamil's defection to Jordan. However, they receded a bit later. Do you still have this conviction? If yes, should there not be a stricter policy toward the Iraqi regime, especially since the channels between you are still open?

[Husayn] They are no longer open, except on the level of humanitarian needs — nothing more and nothing less — in return for the oil which we need. However, the humanitarian need remains a fact. I think that we are all keen, within our utmost capacity, on alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people. But, on the level of understanding, there is no hint or signal that gives us any cause for optimism that there will be a possibility for reaching any kind of understanding with this leadership as long as it continues to adopt the same path it has chosen. So, we care about the Iraqi people and we will support them to the highest degree so that they will find their way out of this situation and return to their nation and live in a normal way.

[Al-Saqr] Your Majesty, I would like to say that there is extreme caution in the Kuwaiti street with regard to Jordan's intentions. The public opinion in our country believes that you once turned your back on the strong relations that used to bind our two countries for no convincing reason. There is fear that what is going on is part of a political game intended to involve Kuwait. I hope your majesty will tolerate my frankness. Does your majesty have anything to say to reassure the Kuwaiti people, who have learned a lesson from past experience?

[Husayn] Some might claim that this took place. However, if we want to go back to the past and examine events, we will find that we suffered a lot under various circumstances and in various periods. But, this has never prompted us to take any [negative] position toward any sisterly Arab country. Kuwait is a sisterly Arab country. We did not plot against it. We worked only to support and back it. We had set a well-known precedent in history in terms of our troops' participation in defending Kuwait. This time we were surprised by an action which we did not expect. We wanted to settle the issue on the Arab level so that we would make the decision that pertains to our future as a nation. That is all that happened. I do not have any designs. By the way, much has been said about plotting and schemes. I swear by God that I have never exploited any Arab brother.

[AL-Saqr] Some say that the size of Saddam's influence — or what you referred to as a penetration which you reject — in Jordan, in addition to your need for Iraqi oil prevents you from adopting a conclusive stand toward Saddam's regime?

[Husayn] A conclusive stand has been adopted with regard to the situation in Iraq: This situation should not continue in this way. Iraq should be saved. The Iraqi people should enjoy democracy and human rights within the framework of pluralism which they represent, the unity of people and their sovereignty on....[sentence incomplete as published]

We will support any attempt to send clear messages to the Iraqi people that they should cooperate and unify their ranks. They should not continue to fear the shedding of blood and what is said about a sea of blood as a result of change. They should reach an understanding and cooperate so that they will live as they used to live in Iraq.

[Al-Saqr] To complete the last question, it is said that the Iraqi Embassy in Amman is an intelligence barracks, and that Saddam's influence in Jordan is so great that it is difficult for the Jordanian Government to contain it. Is there any exaggeration in these remarks, or is there a presence of this kind?

[Husayn] I believe that there is great exaggeration. There is some sympathy with the Iraqi people. This is an existing fact. I believe that the situation here is just like any other Arab country as far as the suffering of the Iraqi people is concerned.

[Al-Saqr] You said more than once in recent months that it is time for change in Iraq. Do you still believe so? What are the actual obstacles to this change, about which we have heard a great deal but have seen no actual measures toward its realization?

[Husayn] Sir, neither I nor anybody else outside Iraq can determine this. This is up to the Iraqi people themselves to decide. We believe that the Iraqi people have reached the point where they are heading toward a change, which, I believe, may take place before not too long. As neighbors, our duty is to support them on the humanitarian level, to try to reconcile the brothers, and to try to confirm that we do not seek to fragment Iraq, but, rather to unite it. We should also try to heal all wounds so that they can reassume their position within their nation, and consequently, let them have their own say. I am confident they will do so soon.

[Al-Saqr] Your majesty is aware that there are two Arab points of view regarding Iraq. Some believe that Saddam's survival is a regional desire, while others are talking about a regional understanding to topple him. Which of the two points of view is closer to reality?

[Husayn] I want to be clear and explicit. At a certain point in time, you and I, Kuwaitis and Jordanians wished that the situation would continue and that Iraq would continue its progress to become an asset to all its Arab nation. We supported it with our utmost. But has what actually happened matched the hopes that existed one day and the suffering of the Iraqi people?

[Al-Saqr] Can the supporters of Iraq and the opponents of the peaceful settlement be considered one trend in Jordan? Can the Arab-Israeli conflict be settled without settling the Iraqi situation? To what extent is this link correct?

[Husayn] Iraq is important as far as stability in the region as a whole is concerned. It is surrounded by various parties that may have their own views on the question of Iraq in particular. They may also entertain ambitions in Iraq. Therefore, it is the duty of everyone of us to do the impossible to prevent Iraq from turning, God forbid, into a point of explosion that may affect the entire region. On the contrary, we should do our utmost toward a peaceful change that leads to Iraq's stability and strength.

[Al-Saqr] Do you believe that the federation proposal has been defeated due to the large-scale Iraqi opposition to it on the grounds that it would partition Iraq, or is it still a realistic option, particularly since you think that Iraq is currently divided and that it should be reunited?

[Husayn] By the way, I would like to state that this proposal was not meant to partition Iraq, as it has been reported. I have not made this proposal in the first place. In response to the views of some Iraqis, I said that federation could be a solution. What I had in mind was an administrative federation or any other arrangement that would ensure equal rights for all. It is not I who would decided this. It is the Iraqi people themselves who would decide this. Our duty is to prepare the grounds for an intra-Iraqi dialogue. At a certain point in time, the Iraqi people would perhaps determine their preference in this regard. We are for Iraq's unity, and we support the arrangement that suits them.

[Al-Saqr] You have repeatedly said that you have "no ambition in Iraq." Nonetheless, some believe that Jordan is playing an extraordinarily large role in the region to the detriment of the roles of other players, such as Egypt, Syria, and Iran. It has also been said that Jordan would not have played such a large role had it not been for Israel's support. Has your recent meeting with President Mubarak dispelled these fears?

[Husayn] President Mubarak is a dear brother, and Egypt is a big sisterly state to all Arabs. Why should we seek to play a role to upstage the roles of friends? Such talk is unreasonable. For Egypt has its prestige and role. Hence, I believe that the recent talks have actually demonstrated this. Our positions and wishes and those of Egypt are harmonious.

With regard to Iran, I believe that Iran seeks to achieve higher goals in Iraq. Syria might also have some goals there. Jordan might be the only party that has neither goals or purposes there. We have declared this and stood by our word in this regard. We aim to rescue Iraq from this situation, and, consequently, to bring about regional stability. This is where we stand on this issue. It is really strange that over the past five years, we have been the object of criticism. And when we take an unambiguous position, the criticism is maintained one way or another. People have befuddled us.

[Al-Saqr] Your majesty: But in your recent speech, you have highlighted the role of the Hashemite family. People have interpreted this as a reminder of the Hashemites' rule [of Iraq].

[Husayn] Our greatest honor is our affiliation to the Hashemite household and our being descendants of this household. Since time immemorial, we, God be praised, have come in harm's way. We have suffered persecution and torture. This has been our lot since the ordeals of al-Hasan and al-Husayn [sons of Imam 'Ali Bin-Abi-Talib], through the days of al-Husayn Bin-'Ali [architect of the Great Arab Revolt], and up to the present time. This is our legacy that keeps us from acting as others do. All that we aim to achieve is our nation's prosperity, because its strength and loftiness are an asset to us. We have no ambitions anywhere.

[Al-Saqr] Some sides propose a Hashemite solution to Iraq?

[Husayn] I do not say anything other than what all the Iraqis say. We will accept what they say. Other than that, I have no interest in Iraq. Praise be to God, I am 60 years old, and I am lucky to have all those good people around me. We have a long experience, and I have become old while serving this country. So, why do I want more?

[Al-Saqr] Is it true that you have received a positive Syrian stand, through President Mubarak, toward the need for a change in Iraq, providing that such a change should not negatively affect the Arab position toward the settlement with Israel?

[Husayn] I did not receive such a thing. The truth is that all I say is that all sides which really want to save Iraq from this situation should cooperate and overcome doubts and suspicions, and work to save Iraq from its ordeal.

[Al-Saqr] The first official Iraqi opposition office has recently been inaugurated in Amman in the name of the [National] Accord Movement. Will this movement play a direct and effective role in the Iraqi arena through Jordan?

[Husayn] I believe that its role will be that of any Iraqi organization elsewhere, which seeks to save Iraq from its current situation.

[Al-Saqr] Will there be offices for the other opposition organizations and leaders?

[Husayn] There is a continuous dialogue with every Iraqi who wants the change.

[Al-Saqr] It is said that Jordan has accepted the presence of U.S. aircraft on its territory to monitor the Iraqi airspace, just like Turkey. Is this a sign of advancing the change process toward a more practical position?

[Husayn] There are no U.S. aircraft on Jordanian territory or in Jordanian bases.

[Al-Saqr] Within what context will the Egyptian-Jordanian-Palestinian summit be held within a few days?

[Husayn] It might be held after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday. Any meeting will discuss all that supports the Palestinian brothers to attain their rights on their national soil, and to strengthen them by all means. This has political, economic, and organizational dimensions. There should be full coordination among us. God willing, this will take place.

[Al-Saqr] Can we say that the recent comprehensive government change in Jordan has taken place to pave the way for a decisive change in Iraq, and, at the same time, in response to the requirements of peace?

[Husayn] This change has something to do with Jordan, with our hopes, and determination to serve this country, God willing. It is time for the youths to assume their responsibilities, the experienced youths. It is time for the change, and I am happy because this dream has come true.

[Al-Saqr] Do you believe that there is a serious possibility for the success of the negotiations on the implementation of Resolution 986 on oil-for-food? Would such a success weaken the Jordanian position, taking into consideration that it will open other ways for the Iraqi regime?

[Husayn] We are with any measure which would alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people. I believe that had the objective been to alleviate Iraq's suffering, it would have accepted it before. However, the reports you and we receive show that the suffering has reached the point of a catastrophe.

[Al-Saqr] Gen. Husayn Kamil hinted that he might return to Baghdad. (The question was posed one day before his departure) Do you believe he was serious, and is there any chill in your relationship with him, or is it just an Arab rejection of any role for him?

[Husayn] I do not know what he exactly said. He is a brother and a guest, who is welcomed. We accepted him along with his family as an Iraq individual. Perhaps he helped me in one issue. He gave me the clearest picture of Iraq and the suffering of the Iraqi people because he was close to the events and he knows the situation well. In fact, I feel that we had to take such a position.

God be praised, we have done what we can for the Iraqis. He is a dear brother, and he can return to the homeland if he wants.

[Al-Saqr] U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry's recent statements say, despite their denial, that Jordan would participate in a plan to topple Saddam. Is there any such plan, and did you discuss that during your meeting with President Mubarak?

[Husayn] No, we are not part of any plan. We maintain a certain position toward Iraq, and we are working to save Iraq.

[Al-Saqr] The Iraqi opposition was supposed to hold a conference in Amman. Have you gone back on that call?

[Husayn] A number of Iraqis attended the Arab Thought Forum. We had no plan for such a conference. Dialogue, however, is going on.

[Al-Saqr] You have recently asked the Iraqi opposition to draw up a new constitution for the country. Do you believe that the Iraqi opposition can do that?

[Husayn] It may not be able to do so, but it has to assure the Iraqi people of the existence of a political discourse in order to ease their fears toward the future. We hope we can support and encourage this trend. We also hope that Iraq will be able to choose its way in a different atmosphere. We have been accused of planning to partition Iraq. Iraq is now divided. The presidential referendum took place in one part of Iraq and the other part is out of control. This means an entrenchment of a bitter situation.

[Al-Saqr] If dramatic developments take place in Iraq and these developments require large-scale Jordanian political and military presence, will you be ready to accept such a presence?

[Husayn] We will wait and see what we can do at any stage. We are ready to offer everything to Iraq and the Arabs. We believe the situation has not reached that point.

[Al-Saqr] Do you believe the same fears will remain whether Saddam continues in power or a sudden change takes place in the authority?

[Husayn] The current situation means weakness, fragmentation, and falling into the abyss. I hope that the situation will change in one way or another.

[Al-Saqr] In Kuwait, we have an issue, of which you are aware. It is the issue of the Kuwaiti prisoners held by the Iraqi regime.

[Husayn] Many messages, calls, and letters have been sent in this regard, but there is no reply. However, this issue should be solved on the humanitarian or Arab levels.

[Al-Saqr] Do you have any information about the prisoners, whose issue is a continuous tragedy?

[Husayn] I know that and there is conflicting information. It was once said that they were all executed. Other times, it was said that they are still alive. I believe that this is an inhuman way of handling this issue and it is disgusting to the human being.

[Al-Saqr] Do you not think that Saddam would not kill them and thus burn a card that is in his hands?

[Husayn] What card? This is a wretched card. We are tired of the problem of cards in this region.

[Al-Saqr] We move to the issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Do you understand the position of the Damascus Declaration states, which rejects first-degree normalization before Israel reaches a settlement with Syria and Lebanon?

[Husayn] There is no specific basis to be applied. There is dialogue and there are contacts. There is also the importance of being reassured of reaching an agreement so that peace would be comprehensive. I believe we are noticing a trend toward achieving a just peace in the region.

[Al-Saqr] There were promises of achieving quick benefits from normalization with Israel, which has not achieved its desired results. Who is responsible for this?

[Husayn] No party is responsible for this. Reality imposes that some time pass before the situation becomes more clear toward realizing a change, achieving a new climate, obtaining all the positive aspects of peace, God willing, and realizing all its requirements. Any project, whether it deals with the Jordan Valley or with cooperation in any field, needs to be studied and requires a framework. All this needs time. We have gone a long way regarding many projects and studies. We will begin to see positive results soon, God willing.

[Al-Saqr] What will be your final stand with respect to the Palestinians and the Israelis concerning the land, particularly Jerusalem?

[Husayn] We have adopted the stand you know. We tried war, and we tried the no-war no-peace state. Now we are in a position where we regained our land and we try to live a real peace and to give the young generation the opportunities it has been deprived of for many years. We hope that we will reach a stage where confidence in the present and the future will be enhanced.

With respect to the Palestinian brothers' cause, we will support them while they assume their responsibilities and make their decisions.

With respect to Jerusalem, the city has two parts. In my opinion, an equation should be reached where the status of Jerusalem would represent the peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Thus, the city will be the symbol of this peace.

There is also the religious dimension. Here, we reject sovereignty by any side over the holy places. We should reach a state of affairs where there will be no sovereignty by any side over the old city of Jerusalem and the holy places of the divine religions. Sovereignty will be for Almighty God and all believers will have free access.

[Al-Saqr] Has the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin expedited the peace process, or are the statements to this effect exaggerated?

[Husayn] This was a shock to me. This is because he was honest in dealing with us. His positions were clear and courageous. This incident drove home the message that just as we have problems, they [the Israelis] have problems; that just as we suffer from extremism, they suffer from extremism; and that just as we have opposition to peace, they have opposition to peace. Viewed from another angle, this incident galvanized the silent majority in Israel in support of the course started by Rabin; namely, the pursuit of peace.

[Al-Saqr] Do you not believe that early elections in Israel will obstruct the peace process?

[Husayn] I believe that the goal is quite the opposite. These elections aim to reinforce the quest for peace by a government with a mandate.

[Al-Saqr] Do you think that Syria's determination to reach agreement [with Israel] on all details to avert the negative aspects of previous agreements reflects an appropriate approach?

[Husayn, laughing] Which agreements? Having debated all details, the Parliament endorsed the peace treaty. We refused to sign a blank sheet which would have forced us discuss details later. This went well with us; God be praised for this. To what extent the pursuit of such an approach has been successful with other brothers is something I am unaware of.

[Al-Saqr] Should we be optimistic that Syria and Lebanon will soon achieve peace with Israel?

[Husayn] We hope for such an eventuality.

[Al-Saqr] This year?

[Husayn] One cannot be specific. But more hard work is being exerted than ever before.

[Al-Saqr] I have a question regarding Jerusalem.

[Husayn] Do not embarrass me, because our brothers would then say that we are privy to everything. I believe that it is only the competent parties that are aware of upcoming developments.

[Al-Saqr] If the circumstances of 2 August 1990 were to be recreated, would you take the same position you took then?

[Husayn] I have thought a lot about this. It is unreasonable for you not to seek to mend fences when sedition breaks up between your brothers. If I had been a conspirator or aware of what was being concocted, the answer would have been different. But, nothing of this happened.

[Al-Saqr] Do you have your own conception for joint Arab action? The old formula is no longer good or viable?

[Husayn] Our wish is to experience a situation different from the current situation. Whenever I visit Europe and see the great accomplishments there in terms of the common market, I feel regret because we have all that it takes to follow suit in accordance with a formula of cooperation and mutual respect.

[Al-Saqr] What about the Arab League formula?

[Husayn] The Arab League is a prerequisite. It is our oldest institution. The strength of the Arab League lies in the contributions that could be made by 200 million Arabs.

Jordan: AL-DUSTUR on King Husayn's AL-SIYASAH 1994 Interview

JN2502192196

[FBIS Report] Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic carries on page 9 of its 25 February edition a 1,500 word report by the JORDANIAN NEWS AGENCY-PETRA on an interview Jordan's King Husayn granted to "Kuwaiti paper AL-SIYASAH Chief Editor Ahmad al-Jarallah in 1994 under the title 'the Taboo Interview' and which was published the day before yesterday."

In this interview, King Husayn explains his efforts to settle the crisis resulting from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait within an Arab framework. King Husayn says in this respect: "From our part, we wish to clarify stands. Our intentions were not bad, and we were not as we were portrayed." King Husayn also affirms that "Jordan is against the occupation of the land of others" as it cannot support such a thing when it has land occupied by Israel, and King Husayn wonders: "How can we accept invasion and occupation? How can we support and defend invasion?"

On the Arab Cooperation Council King Husayn says "that it was the same formula as that of the Gulf Cooperation Council, GCC, and the Arab Maghreb Union and its objective was to rally the Arab countries which were not included in any council or union." On this issue, King Husayn says: "I only did what was best for all out of my belief in Arab integration."

King Husayn also speaks about the weapons and ammunition the Iraqis had left behind in Kuwait and which were in boxes carrying the Jordanian Armed Forces emblem. His Majesty says: "I thank you very much for asking me this question. I really wanted you to asks me such a question so that I can clarify matters and reply. These weapons and ammunition came to Iraq in the name of the Jordanian Armed Forces and with GCC countries' funds. This is so, because you purchased them for Iraq in the name of the Jordanian army when you used to support Iraq in its war with Iran. If you want, we are ready to produce the documents, files, and letters of credit related to these weapons, with the names of the exporting countries." The king adds: "Therefore, the presence of these weapons within the items left behind by the invasion is not evidence that we interfered in the war."

On why he started using the title "al-Sharif Husayn" instead of "His Majesty the king" King Husayn says: "This happened when I returned from one of my shuttle trips to Cairo. The journalists who usually welcome me always start their questions by saying Your Majesty. I told them: I am fed up with these titles. I prefer a more modest title. Call me by my name and if this is not possible, then call me al-Sharif Husayn." King Husayn adds: "This issue was not raised against the backdrop of political calculations. It was just an event which took place at its time and circumstances."

On relations with Saudi Arabia, King Husayn says: "We had different opinions on the issue of the invasion, and this led to what had taken place." The King adds: "We cannot forget the role this Islamic and Saudi leadership has played. It supported us in all our crises, and we would be ungrateful if we deny this."

King Husayn denies any present contacts with Iraq and when asked what advice he can give to Iraq, King Husayn says: "First of all, the advice was of no use when it was necessary and when it should have been heeded. Had the advice been heeded, we would not have experienced this catastrophe. In spite of this, we offer advice now: Iraq should return to a legal state of affairs. Democracy is a way of life. There should be political pluralism, as well as respect for human rights."

King Husayn then discusses the future of the Arab region, particularly in light of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement and following the Jordanian-Israeli agreement and the peace process; the democratic process in Jordan and the formation of parties; and Jordan's role in restoring Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem.

Jordan: King Leaves for U.K., U.S. For Medical Checkups, Talks

JN2502115896 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Their Majesties King Husayn and Queen Nur left the homeland today, with God's care and protection, for London at the beginning of his majesty's tour that will include the United Kingdom and the United States, where his majesty is due to undergo medical checkups. He will also hold a number of meetings with senior U.S. Administration officials, led by His Excellency President Bill Clinton. The talks will deal with the overall bilateral relations, the peace process developments, and issues of common concern.

His majesty will also give lectures and meet with political and intellectual forces active in the U.S. arena. His Highness Crown Prince Hasan took the constitutional oath as regent to his majesty King Husayn during his stay outside the homeland. [passage omitted]

Leaving along with his majesty were His Highness Prince 'Ali, son of King Husayn; His Highness Prince Talal Bin-Muhammad; His Highness Prince Zayd Bin-Shakir; Mustafa al-Qaysi, his majesty the king's adviser for national security affairs and rapporteur of the State Security Council; and a number of officials.

Jordan: Opposition Radio—King To Discuss Anti-Saddam Plans in U.S.

NC2502164096 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian sources have stated that the major and most important part of King Husayn's coming talks with U.S officials in Washington will focus on the current situation in Iraq and on drawing up a general [words indistinct] policy against tyrant Saddam Husayn.

The officials said that the talks, due to be held next month, will also focus on evaluating the U.S. plans backed by the allied countries to oust tyrant Saddam. Jordanian [words indistinct] told (?REUTER) that King Husayn's visit and his meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton [words indistinct].

The agency cites a U.S. official as saying that Jordan now plays a pivotal role in plans to remove Saddam Husayn from power.

Meanwhile, analysts and officials expect ties between Jordan and the Baghdad regime to worsen [words indistinct].

The Jordanian foreign minister [words indistinct] was quoted as saying that he does not believe that ties between his country and the Baghdad regime will improve under the current regime. He emphasized that Saddam knows that Jordan is opposed to his remaining in power and that Jordan's policy toward him has completely changed.

Jordan: King Expresses 'Pain, Disgust' Over Bombings in Israel

JN2502132096 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Italicized passages recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Their Majesties King Husayn and Queen Nur left the homeland, with God's care and protection, this morning for London at the beginning of a tour that will include Britain and the United States. [passage omitted]

In statements to reporters, His Majesty King Husayn spoke about his visit and the checkups he will undergo. His majesty said:

ital>The checkups are periodical — in fact, I should have had them earlier. Praise be to God, I feel I am in the best condition. As for this operation, it is an old issue. God willing, we will solve the problem this time. In Britain, as well as in the United States, I will hold some meetings. I think I will meet with the [U.S.] President too. All the meetings are important and beneficial, God willing.

Regarding the two explosions that took place in Israel today, his majesty said: *In fact, my feeling is one of pain and disgust at the efforts being made to wreck and foil the peace process. These acts claim the lives of innocent people here and there. In fact, we condemn what has taken place.*

Regarding contacts with the brothers in Kuwait, His Majesty King Husayn said: *Everthing is proceeding in the right direction. I am pleased with what was achieved thus far and with our contacts. The 'Id provided a good opportunity; I spoke with his highness the amir and with his highness the crown prince. They are dear brothers. I hope that all that is good will take place.*

Asked about the date of the tripartite summit between his Majesty King Husayn and the Egyptian and Palestinian presidents, his majesty said: *We discussed this issue. I believe that the final-stage talks are not ahead of us directly. God willing, there will be sufficient time to convene this summit.* [passage omitted]

Jordan: King Sends Consolatory Cable to Israeli Prime Minister

JN2502174996 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Majesty King Husayn telephoned Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres this morning. He condemned the bombing incidents in Jerusalem and Ashqelon. His majesty offered condolences to and sympathized with the families of victims. His majesty also sent a cable to Mr. Peres, offering condolences on the victims of the two incidents, which killed a number of innocent people in Israel.

Moreover, His Majesty King Husayn sent a cable to His Excellency Ezer Weizman, the president of Israel, offering condolences to him and to the Israeli people on the victims of the two incidents. [passage omitted]

Furthermore, His Highness Crown Prince Hasan condemned the inhuman incident, which killed innocent people in Jerusalem and Ashqelon. In response to a question by the JORDANIAN NEWS AGENCY, His Highness said that this is a criminal attack in terms of timing because it seeks to undermine the peace process. His highness said that the Palestinian elections were held without any terrorist influence from extremists from both camps. He hoped that dialogue and expression will continue within a framework that respects the peace process. His highness added that these acts and the like seek to fragment coexistence between citizens regardless of their creeds, sects, and religions. He said that these acts deserve stronger condemnation and clearer denunciation because they were perpetrated in the holy city of Jerusalem, which we are seeking to turn into — and we hope it will be — a symbol of peace and an expression of stability, the objectives of which include everyone, as well as a translation for all those who believe in God and their ability to coexist.

His highness the crown prince said he is confident that all security measures and the like must serve lasting and constant objectives to continue the peace process, something which requires consolidated efforts. His highness offered condolences to the bereaved families of victims, hoping that the pain caused by the grave human losses will be an incentive for us to further enhance peace.

Jordan: Prince Hasan Phones Likud's Netanyahu on 'Inhuman' Bombings

JN2602144196 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, phoned Benjamin Netanyahu, head of the opposition Likud Party in Israel, and offered his condolences over the victims of the inhuman bombings in Jerusalem and Ashqelon.

The Likud leader expressed his commitment to the continuation of the peace process and his intention not to allow the extremism and counter-extremism to obstruct the peace process.

Jordan: Government Strongly Condemns Jerusalem, Ashqelon Blasts

JN2502181296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti expressed the Jordanian Government's strong condemnation of the heinous act, which killed a number of innocent citizens in Jerusalem and Ashqelon.

In a telephone conversation with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres this morning, al-Kabariti stressed that more efforts should be exerted to continue the peace process to reach a comprehensive peace throughout the region.

The prime minister also held a similar telephone conversation with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat. They both condemned all kinds of terrorism regardless of its sources, causes, or justifications. They agreed to cooperate with all means in order not to give any forces that are hostile to peace any opportunity and to firmly stand against anyone trying to obstruct the peace process and deprive the people of the region from enjoying stability and prosperity.

Jordan: Information Minister Condemns Blasts in Israel

JN2502194096 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] In statements to Jordan Television, Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir expressed the Jordanian Government's strong condemnation of the two terrorist incidents [in Jerusalem and Ashqelon].

[Begin al-Mu'ashshir recording] I would like to express the Jordanian Government's strong condemnation of the two terrorist incidents that took place in Israel this morning. I would also like to offer the Jordanian Government's condolences to the families of the victims and our wishes of speedy recovery to those who were injured.

Prime minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti contacted Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres today to express his and the Jordanian Government's regret and strong condemnation of those two terrorist acts. He asked him to exert more efforts to continue the peace process.

We absolutely believe that the only response to these barbaric operations is to continue this peace process and block the path of anyone trying to deprive the people of the region of stability and prosperity.

I would like to stress, once again, that the Jordanian Government will do its utmost along with all the good people in the region to render the peace process a success, continue its course, and block these terrorist acts. [end recording]

Jordan: Information Minister on Change in Iraq, Kamil's Return

JN2602093596 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0900 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Information Minister Dr. Mawran al-Mu'ashshir said that the situation in Iraq should change and that we declared our position of support for any effort to end the tribulation of the Iraqi people. This does not at all mean that Jordan plans to change the regime in Iraq, however, because this change should be carried out by the Iraqis.

In a statement to London radio, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said Jordan did not ask General Husayn Kamil to return to Iraq. He chose to do so on his own. Jordan did not expect him to be killed.

In response to a question on why General Kamil decided to return to Iraq, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said that Kamil had tried to contact the Iraqi opposition since he arrived in Jordan. He was recently disappointed because the Iraqi opposition decided not to deal with him. Al-Mu'ashshir emphasized that this is an Iraqi affair, and Jordan is not party to it.

Jordan: al-Kabariti Congratulates Kuwaiti Counterpart on National Day

JN2502200896 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti sent two cables, one to Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, Kuwaiti heir apparent and prime minister, and another to Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, Kuwait's foreign minister, congratulating them on the 35th national day of the fraternal State of Kuwait. In the two cables, the prime minister wished the Kuwaiti people continuous progress and prosperity under stability the country is enjoying. He also hoped that God will protect Kuwait and its people from any harm.

Al-Kabariti attended the reception on this occasion held at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Amman tonight. Al-Kabariti congratulated the [Kuwaiti] brothers on this occasion on behalf of the Government and people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Jordan: al-Kabariti—Husayn Kamil Killing 'Premeditated'

JN2402124496 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has described the killing of Staff General Husayn Kamil Hasan and his brother, Saddam, last night as a criminal act. He said: This is not in defense of Husayn Kamil or his brother, but in defense of the values and principles in which Jordan believes, and which call for respecting human rights and maintaining human dignity. He said that through its commitment to these values and principles, Jordan provided security and a safe haven for Husayn Kamil and his brother.

However, regrettably, he chose to go to where human beings have no dignity and citizens have no freedom.

In a press statement this morning, the prime minister said that President Saddam Husayn's two daughters enjoyed His Majesty King Husayn's hospitality and the security and care provided by his majesty. He added that Husayn Kamil chose to return to his country and left the safe haven provided to him by King Husayn to a place that is known for its methods of dealing with disputes and arguments. He said that what happened in Iraq is part of the normal course of events there.

Al-Kabariti said that the killing of Husayn Kamil and his brothers and father was a premeditated action, a crime, and execution of a sentence that had been passed against him without giving him the chance of a fair trial. This is despite the fact that their security had been guaranteed before their return to Iraq and had been given the impression that they were pardoned.

The prime minister said that his Majesty King Husayn's position was clear; he would not allow them to go anywhere unless they chose to return to their country, and this he allowed them to do.

Jordan: al-Kabariti Summons Iraqi Envoy To Explain Kamil's Killing

JN2402151296 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti summoned the Iraqi ambassador in Amman. He asked him to explain the circumstances surrounding the killing of Husayn Kamil, his two brothers, and father. He also asked him to explain the statements made in Baghdad and attributed to the wives of Husayn Kamil and Saddam Kamil.

In a statement to journalists at noon today, the prime minister said the decision by Husayn Kamil to leave for Iraq was a personal one and that Jordan was committed to providing security and safety for him and his companions during their stay in Jordan.

[Begin al-Kabariti recording] In fact, Husayn Kamil and his brother chose to leave the safe house provided by Abu-'Abdallah [King Husayn] and chose to go to the house of Abu-'Udayy [Saddam Husayn] where they faced the fate they chose for themselves. This is all I can say. I believe that if there is any embarrassment, then it relates to the way in which they were given the impression that they were given security and safety and that they were pardoned. Certainly, there is embarrassment in the events that have taken place, whether those concerning the announcement on their divorce for reasons related to their conduct and actions — such as treason or not abiding by family values — and leaving them to face their fate. [end recording]

Jordan: Royal Court Chief Denies Involvement in Husayn Kamil Return

JN2402135396 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 24 Feb 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Sa'd al-Silawi "Special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman-Royal Court Chief 'Awn al-Khasawinah has said that Jordan had not influenced the decision by Iraqi General Husayn Kamil, who defected last year with his brother and their wives to Jordan, to return to Baghdad, nor had it facilitated his return.

In an interview with MBC television last week, Dr. al-Khasawinah described Jordan's position vis-a-vis the return to Baghdad of Gen. Kamil as similar to that of the old citizens of Athens, whose motto was: "Our city is open; whoever likes to stay is welcome and whoever wants to leave is welcome to do so as well." Dr. al-Khasawinah said Jordan had not interfered directly or indirectly in influencing Gen. Kamil's decision to return home. The decision was taken by Gen. Kamil himself, a guest of His Majesty King Husayn and Jordan, who was accorded hospitality in Jordan, in accordance with Arab traditions.

Gen Kamil's return has raised questions about his failure to carry out his plans to topple the Iraqi regime. In a recent statement, Gen. Kamil alluded to a conspiracy against Iraq. In a statement to MBC, he described the idea of a federated Iraq as a crime and conspiracy that is more dangerous than changing the Iraqi regime. "Perhaps Jordan and other countries have a role in this conspiracy," he charged.

Sources close to the general, however, attributed his departure to the lack of sufficient support from Jordan to topple the Iraqi regime. Responding to these claims, Dr. al-Khasawinah said the two justifications contradict each other. "If Jordan had a role in a conspiracy against Iraq, God forbid, then one of the ways to implement this conspiracy would have been to support Gen. Kamil."

Jordan's position was clear, Dr. al-Khasawinah said. It sought to ease the Iraqi people's suffering. "What happens in Iraq concerns us, as it concerns all the countries of the region." He stressed that Jordan had never been a base for conspiracies against other Arab countries. "Jordan's policy is clear. It is based on non-intervention in the international affairs of other countries." Jordan supports Iraq's territorial integrity and unity, but "we cannot at the same time condone what is happening in Iraq, particularly in relation to human rights violations."

Commenting on the return of Gen. Kamil to Iraq, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the Lower House of parliament Fawzi al-Tu'aymah said Gen. Kamil had left Jordan by his own volition, as he did when he came to Jordan. He stressed that Jordan had no interest in giving Gen. Kamil or any one else seeking political asylum in Jordan, any bigger role.

In interview with MBC on Nov. 6, 1995, Gen. Kamil dismissed as absurd any notion that his defection to Jordan was a ploy, plotted by him, President Saddam Husayn and members of their family.

Salih al-Qallab, a columnist at al-Dustur, said the return of Gen. Kamil and his family has relieved Jordan from a heavy security and political burden which it shouldered for almost six months. With the departure of Gen. Kamil, Jordan has now more room to open dialogue with Iraqi opposition and to maintain its relations with the Iraqi regime.

Jordan: Minister Denies Udayy Saddam Husayn's Presence in Amman

JN2402150896 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir reaffirmed Jordan's clear position on the return of Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil Hasan to Iraq. He said: We do not accept any one-upmanship over this position. When Lt. Gen. Husayn Kamil and the two daughters of President Saddam decided to return to Iraq, Jordan allowed them to do so. There was no objection to their return at any time.

In a press statement, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said: We hoped there would be a fair trial instead of this way in which the killing took place. He denied rumors that 'Udayy, the son of the Iraqi president, is undergoing treatment at the Husayn Medical Center. He said: This report is untrue.

Answering a question, al-Mu'ashshir said: Lt. Gen. Husayn Kamil sought protection from King Husayn and he provided him with kind hospitality. When he chose to return to Iraq, he returned without any objection. Our position toward relations with Iraq is clear. We support any effort seeking to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The information minister denied any prior contacts between Jordan and Iraq concerning the return of Lt. Gen. Husayn Kamil to his country.

Jordan: Minister on Cabinet Meeting on Husayn Kamil Issue

JN2402204096 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 24 Feb 96

[News conference by Jordanian Information Minister Dr. Marwan al- Mu'ashshir with unidentified correspondents at the end of a cabinet meeting in Amman on 24 February — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Al-Mu'ashshir] [passage omitted] The prime minister briefed the Council of Ministers on the circumstances of the issue of General Husayn Kamil and what happened over the past few days in terms of Husyan Kamil's request to leave Jordan and return to Iraq and the acceptance of this request. You, of course, know what happened afterward.

[Correspondent] I would like first to ask if the Jordanian Government is aware of any developments regarding the assassination of Husayn Kamil and whether contacts were held with Iraq in this regard? Recently, we noticed a breakthrough in relations between Jordan and Kuwait. This was clear in the messages exchanged by the crown prince and the Kuwaiti officials. My question is: When will the exchange of messages be replaced by public meetings? Thank you.

[Al-Mu'ashshir] Regarding the first issue, we are only concerned about the statement issued by the Iraqi Government on what was said about the wives of Gen. Husayn Kamil and his brother. We reiterated to the Iraqi ambassador, who was summoned today, that Jordan does not build its economic and trade relations on political stands. However, we reject launching false accusations on the role of Jordan and his majesty the king regarding the Iraqi issue. The stand of Jordan and his majesty the king was very clear. President Saddam Husayn's daughters were under his care and Husayn Kamil was not allowed to take them outside of Jordan unless they wished to go back to Iraq. They preferred to go back to Iraq and this is what really took place. The accusations, which were made [against Jordan], are false and untrue. The government believes that Jordan's interests are above everything else and we will allow nobody to tamper with these interests.

[Correspondent] What about Kuwait?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] Many positive steps were made recently regrading relations between Jordan and Kuwait. I cannot present a definite timetable regarding the coming steps. I can only say that all these steps are in the right direction and we are moving toward restoring the fraternal normal relations between Jordan and sisterly Kuwait.

Jordan: Iraq's Anti-Jordan Accusations on Defection 'Totally False'

JN2402212396 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The cabinet met this evening to discuss a host of topics and developments, particularly its policy statement to Parliament later this week.

Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir told reporters tonight that discussion also focused on the government's economic policy. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, al-Mu'ashshir voiced the government's concern about Iraqi statements quoting the Iraqi president's daughters on their defection to Jordan. He said: Such accusations are totally false and untrue.

[Begin al-Mu'ashshir recording] Well, what we are concerned about in this matter is the accusations that have been leveled against Jordan by Iraq. The prime minister has called the Iraqi ambassador this morning to request an explanation of what happened and to emphasize that Jordan will not stand and will not accept these accusations that are totally and categorically untrue.

At the same time, our trade relations with Iraq continue, and we have no intention of mixing politics with these relations and of basing these relations on political positions. [end recording]

Jordan: Security Organs Reportedly Asking Iraqis To Join Opposition

JN2602111896 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 26 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD learned that Jordanian security organs have recently begun contacting a number of Iraqi intellectuals present in Jordan to encourage them to join the Iraqi opposition.

An Iraqi university professor said privately that security officials summoned him and some of his colleagues who work at Jordanian universities and suggested they join the Iraqi opposition that began acting in the open in Jordan after the government of Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti was formed.

Meanwhile, security officials have contacted Iraqi opposition figures in Jordan and have asked them to specify their addresses so that they can be protected in case of any emergency that develops as a result of the killing of General Husayn Kamil.

Jordan: Arabic Dailies View Husayn Kamil Murder

JN2502185796

[FBIS Report] The Jordanian Arabic dailies, AL-DUSTUR, AL-RA'Y, and AL-ASWAQ, on 25 February publish articles and editorials on the killing of Husayn Kamil, his two brothers Saddam and Hakim, and their father in Baghdad.

In a 400-word article on page 22 and under the "Spotlights" column entitled "Keeping Away from Iraqi Affairs," columnist Tahir al-'Adwan says that the death of Husayn Kamil and his two brothers have put an end to the mystery that surrounded his defection to Jordan. For the man really sought to topple the Iraqi regime with the help of foreign and Arab parties and with the assistance of the Iraqi opposition, but his efforts were met with abysmal failure. "That is why he walked to death on foot," the columnist contends.

The capitals of the region that refused to receive him and the Iraqi opposition factions that declined to cooperate with him drove him to make the suicidal decision to return to Baghdad. The mistake that Husayn Kamil made was believing that Washington aims to topple the person of Saddam Husayn. "The United States and its allies seek to turn the whole of Iraq upside down. They want to redraw its demographic and social makeup, and not only its political structure. So, the Iraqi regime is fighting with its back to the wall," the columnist argues.

The columnist concludes by saying: "If there are lessons to be learned from the story of Husayn, these lessons concern the need to refrain from any policy that could be interpreted as interference in Iraq's political affairs. We as Arabs and neighbors of Iraq must support all that could alleviate the sufferings of the Iraqi people under the continued sanctions. As for Iraq's current situation and political future, it is something the Iraqis themselves should decide. It is up to Iraqis: To their political regime and to their social, political, and party structures to decide such a thing."

Under the column "The Last Station," by Salih al-Qallab, AL-DUSTUR publishes an approximately 500-word article on pages 24 and 20 on the killing of Husayn Kamil and his two brothers in Baghdad. Al-Qallab maintains that the mistake Husayn Kamil made was that he trusted the "word of honor" relayed to him by "evil go-betweens." The columnist believes that the Iraqi Government should not have allowed Husayn Kamil's clan to take his life and the lives of his relatives. Civilized conduct should have prevailed, he argues.

Concluding, the columnist maintains that Husayn Kamil's slaying has put ammunition in the hands of those who seek to perpetuate the Iraq sanctions.

In the "Viewpoint" column by Muhammad al-Subayhi, Amman AL-DUSTUR publishes an approximately 450-word article on page 4 on the Kamils' slaying in Baghdad, saying that the murder of Husayn Kamil "inflicts grievous harm on the Iraqi Government; torpedoes the credibility of the regime, which has announced that it is heading toward pluralism, clemency, general amnesty; and leaves one with the general impression that bloody liquidations are still part of the Iraqi political lexicon."

The killing of Husayn Kamil puts ammunition in the hands of the Iraqi opposition, which believes that the Iraqi regime cannot be trusted, the columnist contends.

The columnist does not rule out the possibility that Husayn Kamil's defection was theatrical, and that it could be part of an Iraqi intelligence game. When he played his role, the need for him no longer existed. So, he had to die, he argues.

Concluding, he wonders whether the slaying of Husayn Kamil is the beginning of a bloodbath in Iraq.

AL-DUSTUR publishes on page 25 a news analysis on the killing of Husayn Kamil, his two brothers, and his father, saying that the tragedy of Husayn Kamil's death was of his own making.

The analysis relates the developments that led to Husayn Kamil's death. "Husayn Kamil appeared to be counting on the personal relationship he had with President Saddam Husayn. For he described as normal the Iraqi leadership's position toward his decision to return home."

Husayn Kamil's efforts to join the Iraqi opposition were met with failure, because Iraqi exiles refused to deal with a man who was very close to Saddam Husayn. This drove him to despair. That is why he decided to return home, the analysis maintains.

The return to Iraq by Saddam's sons-in-law drew varying reactions. Some quarters questioned the information Husayn Kamil gave to the United States and the United Nations on Iraqi weapons programs.

Concluding, the analysis maintains that the death of Husayn Kamil confirms the vindictive conduct of the Iraqi regime and its lack of tolerance as well as the impossibility of opening channels for dialogue between the Iraqi regime and the opposition. This also confirms that Jordan was not a party to the general's defection to Jordan.

Under the "Everyday" column and under the headline "The Size of the Adventure and Its Cost," by columnist Tariq Masarwah, Amman AL-RA'Y on page 20 says that nothing justifies murder. "Neither the honor of the family, nor the honor of a political regime justifies murder." But he acknowledges that this conduct will remain a hard fact of life in this part of the world until there is a fairer world and regional order. World powers used Husayn Kamil's defection to Jordan and his return home for propaganda purposes in their war against the Iraqi regime. The U.S. delegate to the United Nations reacted vehemently to the slaying of Husayn Kamil. The columnist says: "If the liquidation of a single person, which is a dangerous thing to do, has been called a moral outrage, what about the attempt to liquidate a whole people in Iraq, Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Somalia?"

Masarwah concludes by saying: "Nothing justifies murder, the murder of a single person or the murder of a whole people."

Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic on page 19 publishes an approximately 500-word editorial on the killing of Husayn Kamil, saying that the outrageous murder was received with consternation because the general returned to Baghdad after he had received a word of honor that he had been pardoned. The paper draws a comparison between the tyrannical approach of Saddam Husayn and the tolerant policy pursued by King Husayn of Jordan, who pardoned people who received death sentences. The paper says that the vicious circle of tyrannical and despotic rule must be broken.

Jordan: Saddam Stands To Lose 'Great Deal' From Husayn Kamil Murder

JN2502113296 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 25 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Brutality With No Limits"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The murder in Baghdad on Friday of General Husayn Kamil, his father and two brothers could not have taken place without the blessings, even the direct involvement, of the Iraqi regime. It is inconceivable that President Saddam Husayn had intended to honour his pardon of Gen. Kamil and his brother S Saddam over their defection to Jordan six months ago or taken seriously his public assurances to his two sons-in-law that their safety would be guaranteed upon their return to their homeland. The Iraqi president, it must be remembered, has no history of leniency or compassion towards even members of his own family when it came to even mild criticism of, let alone disagreement on, his policies and practices.

The fact that Gen. Kamil and his brother Saddam were forced to divorce their wives, both daughters of the Iraqi president, only hours before their murder lends weight to the proposition that the Iraqi regime was hatching a plot for them. Furthermore, no clan member of the two victims would have dared lift a finger against them without the approval of President Saddam, especially that the murder was carried out near the centre of Baghdad, where the Iraqi regime enjoys full control. The bloody shoot-out between the attackers and their victims indicated that the Kamils had sensed danger and accordingly prepared themselves for it in whatever limited way they could.

Should anybody then have tried to talk the two men out of their decision to walk right down to their death trap? Surely many people knew all along that there was no way that the regime would keep the two defectors alive after their return to their country. Thus the two bear the consequences of their decision since they, more than anyone else, knew the character and mentality of their president and father-in-law.

But over and above that the murder of Gen. Kamil, his two brothers and father, along with the continued suffering of the Iraqi people, are certainly the immediate responsibility of President Saddam whose regime has based its legitimacy solely on brutal force. That is why the Iraqi president and the ruling class around him stand to lose a great deal from what happened on Friday. Any remaining goodwill that was generated, locally or internationally, out of sympathy with the Iraqi people, will certainly not benefit a regime that does not even honour its own promises.

Jordan: Columnist Says Country 'Relieved' of Husayn Kamil 'Burden'

JN2302135196 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 23 Feb 96 pp 24, 20

["Last Station" column by Salih al-Qallab: "A Commodity Returned to Its Owner"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Regardless of the real motive of his coming to Amman, and whether it was one of the tricks for which the Orient is famous, or mere brief anger caused by a family quarrel, the return to Iraq by Husayn Kamil along with all those who came with him relieved Jordan of a heavy political and security burden which it endured for six long months.

As far as we are concerned, we do not care if Baghdad received Husayn Kamil as a good son and national hero who carried out the duty assigned to him or as a misled son who returned after straying away from the right path, and after he was accused of stealing the money of the Iraqi people and being an agent of the United States and all the forces that are hostile to Iraq and the Arab nation.

What concerns us is that we have been relieved of this burden and that this commodity, whether good or bad, has returned to its owner, and that Jordan now has the freedom to deal with the Iraqi question, is able to hold a dialogue with the Iraqi opposition and to continue its relations with the regime in Baghdad away from the Husayn Kamil phenomenon and the doubts and conditions that surrounded him.

We are not at all concerned whether Husayn Kamil resumes his previous posts and practices what he used to practice. We are not concerned whether his family, which is the family of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn himself, implements the decision that declares killing Husayn Kamil as lawful, which it adopted immediately after his defection. We are not concerned whether or not he will be put on trial for stealing the money of the Iraqi people and for being an agent to the hostile forces. What concerns us is that we have gotten rid of that transient phenomenon that poisoned our relations with Iraq, the Iraqi opposition, and many sisterly Arab states.

Those who described Husayn Kamil as a traitor, renegade, and robber of the Iraqi people's money will describe him as the lion of Babylon, Tikrit, and Iraq and will find a thousand excuses for what he did. They may find justification for him to assume new posts in addition to his previous ones, which amounted to more than 20 central and main posts.

We are not concerned whether Husayn Kamil opens the files of the Iraqi leaders who spoke about him during his absence and who dared to slander him and describe him as a thief, traitor, or renegade. What concerns us in this country is that we welcomed a man who came to us requesting refuge and safety, which we gave him without trying to open his heart and search his luggage to find out whether his defection was a mere trick of those for which the Orient is famous, or whether he came in certain circumstances which are now over.

Jordan: Columnist Views Husayn Kamil's Return, Jordan's Stand

JN2302183896 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 23 Feb 96 p 22

[From the "Words" column by Falih al-Tawil: "The Return of the General"]

[FBIS Translated Text] General Husayn Kamil's return to Iraq on 19 February 1996, like his defection to Jordan six months earlier, raises many questions. Kamil's return has prompted the Jordanians — who stand with arms folded in the face of the tragedy that is killing Iraq's children and destroying, in a brutal and barbaric way, a regional role that only Iraq can play — to ask questions in order to understand the situation.

In a statement broadcast by Radio Monte Carlo on the first day of the 'Id [20 February], the general spoke about the possibility of returning to Baghdad, as well as about the ongoing contacts for this purpose. Some people believed that his return was possible, while others believed it was not. Nobody knew that the general was already crossing the Jordanian border to return home and was being welcomed warmly as an expression of the sincerity of the amnesty granted by President Saddam Husayn to his son-in-law and the other defectors that accompanied him.

In light of these new developments, Husayn Kamil is no longer considered an Iraqi politician of interest. His decision to return was made of his own will, following the failure or success of his defection. However, the Jordanians and the majority of the Arabs are now concerned again about the ordeal of Iraq, after six months of thinking that Iraq had been taking care of things through hidden corridors and through messengers like Husayn Kamil. Nobody doubted Husayn Kamil's ongoing contacts with the Americans and with all the forces that have serious and effective relations with the Iraqi opposition and all its ideological and political affiliations.

Since Husayn Kamil defected last August, Arab and Islamic countries have changed their stands vis-a-vis Iraq. Jordan accepted Husayn Kamil and has dealt with the Iraqi opposition as another means to lift the siege imposed on Iraq. Jordan's stand was different from that other countries, which viewed the Iraqi opposition as a political tool to control Iraq and a means to continue their coercion and tighten the blockade against it.

Regardless of Husayn Kamil's role in this change, Jordan is now playing host to the Iraqi opposition, of which Husayn Kamil failed to become a leaders. Jordan has also become a target for those who want to deny its leading role and its call to establish pluralism and political freedom to unite Iraq and to reach radical solutions to Iraq's basic problems. Other countries have changed their methods of dealing with the Iraqi opposition. Iran, for example, dispatched a number of ranking politicians to [Iraqi] Kurdistan after it was satisfied with the opposition's meetings in friendly capitals. Other countries are also dispatching economic delegations to Iraq to signal their desire for reconciliation.

The phenomenon of Husayn Kamil has not stopped with his return to Baghdad, because the problem that led to his defection still exists, although the methods of tackling this problem have changed since the general's defection. Even Iraq has changed its methods of dealing with the problem as a major player, along with the other players inside and outside the region.

Iraq itself is now holding talks on oil sales with the United Nations in New York. It has been said that Baghdad has issued a political decision to accept all the UN conditions, which were previously considered to encroach on Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and its regional and international role.

There are now many developments in this issue. It is natural to say that the issue is more complicated than the recent questions, because the mind that controls the issue is complicated. Husayn Kamil's return to Iraq might be a small link in the chain and will be followed by other events, just as his defection prompted other developments — the effects of which are demonstrated in the national, regional, and international changes vis-a-vis Iraq and in the network of international relations around him.

The Jordanians, however, are concerned about one thing these days: What about the siege imposed on Iraq? When will this ordeal end? The Jordanians call for exerting earnest efforts to end this ordeal, regardless of the price they and this country will have to pay. This is the main reason for their interest in Husayn Kamil's defection and their questions about his return and about what all these developments mean to relations with Iraq, including any changes.

Lebanon: PFLP-GC, Hizballah Official Praise Bombings in Israel

NC2502175596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Lebanon, Hizballah has praised the Jerusalem and Ashqelon bombings. Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim sent greetings to those who carried them out, saying: The Islamist spirit of jihad that those strugglers showed will remain the basic method of handling issues and the torch that will light the way and prevent Israel from achieving its objectives.

Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command [PFLP-GC] has stated that the two operations underline the Palestinian people's real position of rejection of the treasonous agreements with the Israeli enemy, as he put it.

Lebanon: Ban on Demonstrations Reiterated; Syria's Khaddam Consulted

NC2602065496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri will open al-'Adliyah Bridge this morning. After that, he will hold a series of meetings with members of the Ministerial Committee to learn the results of their contacts concerning social issues, especially labor demands. Michel al-Murr, deputy prime minister and interior minister, said after a visit to Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri that the period up to 29 February [the date set by the General Workers Federation to stage a strike and demonstrations] may bring positive developments. Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri met with Minister Michel al-Murr and Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul last night. They discussed developments and stressed that the government adheres to its ban on demonstrations, saying that this was discussed with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam. They noted that the government is open to everything and to all demands, and that an understanding on a large portion of labor demands has been reached. They noted that the Ministerial Committee is discussing not only labor demands, but also other things. The committee will forward the results of its discussions to the Council of Ministers.

For his part, General Workers Federation President Ilyas Abu-Rizq reiterated insistence on staging the strike and the demonstrations.

Lebanon: Hizballah Leader Gives News Conference on Prisoners

NC2302143796 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 1235 GMT 23 Feb 96

[Report by Ahmad Abu-'Ali]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a new initiative by the party following an initiative on the first day of 'Id al-Fitr, Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah announced his readiness to release all 19 of the Lahdist [South Lebanese Army, SLA] prisoners in return for the release of all the hostages and detainees held in the al-Khiyam Prison.

He noted that the party is also prepared to hand over the bodies of two Israeli soldiers in return for the release of all the hostages and detainees in the enemy's jails.

The Hizballah secretary general's initiative today was announced in a news conference held by his eminence at the al-Imam al-Khomeyni Cultural Center in Harat Hurayk. It was attended by Deputy Bisharah Mirhij, chairman of the Chamber of Deputies's Human Rights Committee; Deputy al-Haj Muhammad Birjawi, a member of the committee; Ibrahim 'Abdallah, chairman of the Lebanese Human Rights Society; Muhammad Safa, secretary of the follow-up committee in charge of supporting the Lebanese detainees in Israeli jails and al- Khiyam Prison; members of the committee in charge of supporting the detainees; and representatives of Lebanese and foreign visual, audio, and print media.

In his news conference his eminence distinguished between the people held by the party and the detainees and hostages held by [SLA Commander General Antoine] Lahd and the Zionist enemy.

Nasrallah said: Those held by the party are prisoners of war, be they from the Lahdist group or Zionists captured during confrontations. But all those who are held in al-Khiyam Prison and enemy jails are regarded as hostages and detainees. They cannot be called prisoners of war because they were arrested at crossing points and at their homes, in fields, and workplaces in the border strip.

His eminence emphasized the oneness of the prisoners issue, saying it cannot be divided under the new initiative. He denied that this initiative has any political background, saying it was prompted by humanitarian considerations. He noted that the detainees issue has always been active and asserted that the enemy must free all the hostages held in his jails, primarily the main prisoner, Shaykh 'Abd-al-Karim 'Ubayd, and Abu-'Ali Mustafa al- Dirani.

Noting that he is not holding any Israeli pilot, he said: Had he been with us, we would have immediately swapped him with the hostages held in the enemy jails. In this regard we hide no information and fear no one. He stressed that his initiative today to swap the prisoners held by the party for those held in al-Khiyam Prison is a response to enemy claims published by the media on 10 February 1996. The claims indicated that the Zionist deputy war minister categorically rejected a request to discuss the fate of detainees held in al-Khiyam Prison, a request submitted by the secretary general of the international organization for the defense of human rights, [name indistinct], on the pretext that al-Khiyam Prison is under the control of the so-called SLA.

His eminence said that supposing this claim was right... [sentence left incomplete following beginning of Nasrallah recording in progress; begin Nasrallah recording] We say to Antoine Lahd: Today we are ready to handle the issue of Lahd's prisoners held by us and the detainees held by Lahd. We reiterate that this does not mean we will forget our brothers held in Israeli jails, primarily His Eminence Shaykh 'Abd-al-Karim 'Ubayd, Haj Abu-'Ali al-Dirani, and the rest of the brothers. [end recording]

Lebanon: Hizballah Radio Reports Israel's Rejection of Initiative

NC2402083596 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yesterday, Hizballah announced an initiative for the exchange of prisoners and detainees between Hizballah and the occupation forces and their agents. The initiative was launched by Hizballah Secretary General Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah during a news conference held in Harat Hurayk yesterday. [passage omitted]

The Zionist enemy has rejected the initiative. In remarks which confirm the enemy's disregard for the agents [South Lebanese Army], Deputy Defense Minister Uri Or told the enemy television that Israel will not discuss the release of Lebanese prisoners if the exchange does not include Israeli pilot Ron Arad. Uri Or claimed that Hizballah's proposal is not serious.

Lebanon: Return of Islamists From Bosnia Said Causing Problem

NC2302151796 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 19 Feb 96 p 13

[FBIS Translated Text] A problem that may grow into a crisis has begun to surface. It involves some 200 Lebanese affiliated with fundamentalist Islamic trends who fought alongside the Bosnian Army before the Dayton Agreement was reached. Lebanese have carried out training and combat missions with the Bosnian Army over the past few years. Under the Dayton agreement, they cannot remain in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The agreement states that all foreigners who fought alongside the parties to the conflict in former Yugoslavia must leave the country, except for those who married Bosnian women. The exception applies to about 50 Lebanese.

These Islamists belong to Hizballah and other Islamic movements in Beirut, Tripoli, and Sidon. While their parties insist on their return to Lebanon, a problem over their return emerged a few days ago in the Sayyidat al-Wardiyah celebrations, when the interior minister announced that those people are criminals and the Lebanese authorities cannot accept their return.

An informed source said that other groups from several Arab and Islamic countries are facing the same problem. There is fear that their return will create a phenomenon similar to that of the Afghan Arabs, from which the region has recently been suffering.

Lebanon: Paper Alleges U.S. Storing Weapons in Gulf States

NC2302152096 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 19 Feb 96 p 7

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States is working to improve relations among the Gulf states, and it will send diplomats to the region very soon.

Washington is also planning to deploy troops and to stockpile strategic weapons in all the Gulf states without exception. These weapons and troops will be ready to thwart any danger coming primarily from inside, not from outside as Washington claims.

Lebanon: Israeli Shelling Reported; 2 Amal Members Wounded in Attack

NC2302163496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1500 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli occupation artillery emplacements in al-Zaffatah and al-'Ayshiyah bombarded the outskirts of Habbush and al-Wadi al-Akhdar with 155-mm shells at about 1400 [1200 GMT] today. The shelling reached the woods of Sujud, al-Rayhan, and al-Jarmaq.

The Amal Movement announced that one of its groups foiled an Israeli infiltration attempt on al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa. It said that clashes involving various types of weapons ensued, compelling the attacking force to retreat after suffering losses in personnel and equipment. As a result, the Amal Movement added in its statement, two members of the Lebanese Resistance Battalions were wounded and evacuated from the operation area.

Lebanon: More Israeli Shelling Reported in South

NC2302190196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1750 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iqlim al-Tuffah hills, namely al-Jabal al-Rafi', the Habbush River basin, al-Luwayzah, and al-Wadi al- Akhdar, came under concentrated artillery fire from Israeli positions in al-Zaffatah this afternoon. At 1800 [1600 GMT] today, the shelling targeted the woods of Habbush and the southern neighborhood of 'Arab Salim.

Lebanon: 'Resistance' Detonates Charge Near Israeli-SLA Patrol

NC2402133896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Resistance announced that one of its groups detonated an explosive charge near a joint Israeli enemy and Lahdist [South Lebanese Army, SLA] force traveling on the road leading to the Tallush post at 1315 today. A statement released today confirmed that the force sustained casualties.

The Israeli forces located in Muhaybib and al-'Abbad hill bombarded the outskirts of Qabrikha and al-Saluqi valley. The shelling reached the southern approach to the town of Qabrikha. Security sources said that approximately 40 rounds of 155-mm and 120-mm caliber shells fell in these areas.

Lebanon: Islamic Resistance Claims Attacks; Israelis Shell Areas

NC2602101296 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The woods of Zawtar al-Sharqiyah and Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, the Litani River basin, and Mazra'at al-Hamra' are now coming under Israeli artillery shelling. Earlier in the morning, the Israeli artillery shelled the al-Marj region, between Arnun and Kafr Tibnit.

In a statement today, the Islamic Resistance said one of its groups detonated an explosive charge under an Israeli patrol along Qal'at al-Shaqif-al-Hamra' road at 0930 today. The statement said a second group shelled Qal'at al-Shaqif post with rocket-propelled grenades. Two Israeli helicopters that were flying over the area evacuated the casualties among the patrol members, the statement added.

Lebanon: 3 'Terrorists' Wounded by IDF in Security Zone

TA2302171596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Three terrorists were wounded in a clash with IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers in south Lebanon last night. Our forces sustained no casualties. Our correspondent in the north Ilan Ro'e reports that last night, an IDF contingent was on operational activity in the eastern sector of the security zone. The force opened fire at the terrorists and during the exchange, three terrorists were apparently wounded. The wounded terrorists fled.

Lebanon: Hizballah Radio Details 'Resistance' Operations

NC2402074396 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0635 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Report by Samir 'Alami]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The situation in the south remains tense in view of Zionist attacks on the liberated areas over the past few hours. The Zionist forces bombarded the liberated areas in Iqlim al-Tuffah and al-Nabatiyah yesterday evening and this morning. The Islamic Resistance retaliated by carrying out heroic operations that inflicted further losses on the enemy and his agents.

Shortly after 0630 today, the occupation forces pounded the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, al-Nabatiyah, Kafr Rumman, and the deserted army barracks with 155-mm shells. [passage omitted] Zionist warplanes are currently conducting mock raids over al- Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Resistance dealt severe blows to the enemy and his agents to defend its defenseless kin. The Islamic Resistance this morning carried out a series of operations in the south and western al-Biqa'. At 0605, an Islamic Resistance group attacked the occupation position in Taw'amat Niha, using machine guns and rockets. The mujahidin succeeded in destroying the position's fortifications. At the same time, the support unit bombarded the enemy position in Kafr Huna with the appropriate weapons.

At 0630, another group attacked the enemy position in Sujud with rockets and machine guns. A third group attacked the Bi'r Kallab position with rockets, inflicting casualties. The support unit bombarded the Sujud and Bi'r Kallab positions, scoring direct hits.

At 0635, martyr Muhammad Najm group launched a lightning attack on a Zionist patrol near the al-Dabshah position, using machine guns and rockets.

Several members of the patrol were either killed or wounded. Meanwhile, other Islamic Resistance groups bombarded the same position with the appropriate weapons, scoring direct hits. Two enemy helicopters were spotted landing in the al-Dabshah position to evacuate casualties. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: 2 'Resistance' Fighters Killed in Israeli Raids

NC2402113496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0900 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation forces this morning bombarded the army's deserted barracks on al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, the eastern ridges of Kafr Rumman, and the woods of Kafr Tibnit. The enemy forces also shelled the 'Ayn al-Tinah hills, Mashgharah, Maydun, and al-Surayri in western al-Biqa'.

The resistance announced that two resistance fighters were martyred during the air raids on Iqlim al-Tuffah yesterday. Their funeral will take place in al-Nabatiyah at noon today.

Lebanon: IDF Discovers Wreck of Hang Glider

TA2402192796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The wreck of the hang glider that exploded over the Majd al-Silm area on 20 February was discovered near the border of south Lebanon's security zone today, along with the body of a terrorist. Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that the hang glider was found in the course of searches conducted by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces].

Lebanon: Israeli 'Aggressions' Against South Continue Overnight

NC2602072696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israeli acts of aggression against the south and Western al-Biqa' continue with artillery shelling, machine-gun racking by helicopters, and a naval blockade of the southern coast. Correspondents of the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY [NNA] in the south this morning reported Israeli aggressions against a number of liberated villages in the various sectors. They said the racking operations and the dropping of flares continued until early this morning. The aggressions targeted Tulin, Qabrikha, Majdal Silm, Wadi al-Hujayr, Shaqra, Zibqin, Arnun, and Kafr Tibnit woods. The NNA said the Israeli occupation forces and their agents are engaged in oppressive and terrorist practices against residents of houses in the outer parts of some villages to force their evacuation. They closed al-Hamra' and Bayt Yahun crossings all day yesterday, and a group of agents were raiding and searching houses in the occupied villages of Yarin and al-Bustan. The resistance reacted to these aggressions by launching a series of operations against enemy posts in the occupied strip. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: 2 IDF Soldiers Sustain Slight Injuries in South

TA2602100796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers sustained slight back injuries in south Lebanon. Our correspondent Ilan Ro'e reports that Hizballah terrorists shelled the Beaufort outpost in the security zone's central sector. The two wounded soldiers were evacuated to a hospital in Zefat.

Syria: Damascus Radio Reviews 'General Atmosphere' Before Wye Talks

JN2502163596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: A new round of the Syrian- Israeli peace talks will begin in the U.S. State of Maryland on Wednesday [28 February] amid a general atmosphere which does not indicate that there is a possibility of making substantial progress in reducing the current gaps. Despite this atmosphere, we believe that the sincere will, the will of peace and its responsibilities, will be able, if reactivated and bolstered, to achieve something which would contribute to serving the achievement of the required progress. This is if Israel actually wants this. The sincere will toward a great action, such as the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in a region where tension still prevails, and where security and stability are absent, necessitates a desire to assume responsibilities to overcome this important and strategic turning point. This is necessary as long as the objective is to establish peace and to achieve security and stability in a region which has always been a key to world security and stability. The prevailing situation always stresses the importance of achieving justice, equality, and right, and of recognizing the rights of others who defend these rights by all means. It seems that the situation will continue to be so as long as a just and comprehensive peace is still absent.

Developments in the region, particularly in Israel, whether regarding the legislative elections, or regarding tension and confrontations, should urge those who are concerned and the decisionmakers to assume their responsibilities for a just and comprehensive peace. These responsibilities include fully recognizing others' rights, withdrawing from their land, and developing new concepts based on the language of this age. These new concepts include the rejection of occupation, the confiscation of others' rights, the forceful imposition of a strange will on them, and other things our region has become accustomed to over several decades, specifically since the establishment of Israel in the region.

In light of this, there should be a political review in line with the election campaign in a way which would lead to setting logical constants for solutions and finding practical ways out of the impasse, which would secure better circumstances, as well as the necessary requirements to advance the peace process toward the objective which has been set for it since the U.S. initiative was launched. Only then will gaps be bridged and the expected peace talks in Maryland succeed. Consequently, this will contribute to creating an election atmosphere which would serve peace, advance it, and build on its principles, instead of the atmosphere which is prevailing in the region as a result of the escalation in Israeli society regarding competition on votes instead of competition on the future which can be achieved through a just and comprehensive peace.

Syria: Press—Bombings Highlight 'Dire Need' for True Peace

JN2602080296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 26 Feb 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] TISHRIN comments on the Maryland talks, which will resume on 28 February. The paper notes that the recent bombings in Israel confirm the dire need for peace, which is impossible to achieve without a just and comprehensive solution.

TISHRIN asserts that the Maryland talks will address substantial issues, such as Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan and the security arrangements. If the Israeli negotiator displays good will, then it will be possible to overcome many obstacles and solve many problems.

The paper notes that the talks are technical, as well as political, in nature. A timetable for Israel's withdrawal from the Golan must be worked out. There are also the security arrangements and the related complications. All these issues require intervention by specialists, pending a decisive political decision.

From this perspective, Syria agreed to pursue the Maryland talks to show its sure desire to achieve a just and comprehensive peace and to expedite the results. Syria believes there can be no peace without Israel's full withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines, in implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle.

TISHRIN concludes that half solutions can never achieve peace. There is no alternative to full accommodation of the requirements of peace. Everybody knows that peace in the Middle East depends on Israel's full withdrawal and meeting the just demands of Syria and Lebanon. This is the key to a firm and comprehensive peace in the region.

Under the headline "True Peace and the Cycle of Violence," AL-BA'TH says: No doubt, the incidents that took place — and may continue to take place in the future — are the result of not achieving the desired peace. These incidents are also the outcome of the agreements signed between Israel and some Arab sides. These agreements brought more tension, violence, and instability to the region.

The paper emphasizes the need for serious action to establish a just and comprehensive peace based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle. This will halt the cycle of violence in the region and provide security and stability for everybody. The international community says that what has been done so far is not a peace that can put an end to the acts of violence, because this peace ignores the essential facts of the conflict in the region. This peace is inequitable and unbalanced.

AL-BA'TH adds: Syria stressed that true peace is one that brings security and stability. It is possible to achieve this peace if the parties decide to implement the foundations and principles of the peace process, instead of avoiding its obligations.

AL-BA'TH continues: The Arabs have confirmed that they are advocates of true peace. Syria cooperated with all the efforts in this regard. The U.S. sponsor acknowledged that Syria has provided many rare opportunities to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. However, these opportunities have been wasted because of Israel's rejection of any clear and unambiguous commitment to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy, specifically full withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

The paper concludes that peace based on international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle can provide security and stability for everybody and end the cycle of violence in the region.

Syria: Daily Says 'Normal, Good Relations' With Turkey Sought

JN2502173796 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0815 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus (SANA)—In today's editorial by its chief editor Muhammad Khayr al-Wadi, the newspaper TISHRIN affirms Syria's determination to maintain normal, good relations with Turkey, spare these relations of any serious pitfalls, and refrain from responding to certain Turkish news media and their campaigns which, it says, are full of fallacies, bad intentions, and hostile feelings toward the Syrian people. In dealing with these campaigns, the paper says, Damascus arms itself with patience, cool nerves, and the determination to preserve the relations of good neighborliness so as not to allow biased forces to undermine these relations and push them in the direction of tension and estrangement.

The paper explains: It is the exacerbated crises inside Turkey which have led to the escalation of these anti-Syrian campaigns, which seek to hold Damascus responsible for Turkey's internal problems instead of making a serious effort to tackle the causes of these problems and finding the appropriate solutions to them.

TISHRIN declares Syria's full determination not to interfere in Turkey's internal affairs and affirms that Syria will not undertake any action which could harm relations between the two neighboring countries. The paper points out that Syria will continue with its endeavor to resolve the water problem in a manner that is consistent with the relations of good neighborliness and guarantees the rights of every side in accordance with international laws and pacts, so that water will not be used as a means for pressure and settling political accounts.

The paper underlines Syria's constant affirmation that the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers must continue to be, as they have always been throughout history, a means for rapprochement, a bridge for understanding, and a source for creative cooperation which serves both the Syrian and Turkish people, and that efforts must continue to be exerted to translate these concepts into a definite reality and tangible measures.

TISHRIN continues: But, the water problem cannot be resolved by one side only. It needs the concerted efforts of both sides and the existence of a sincere desire to find a lasting solution that eliminates all causes of misunderstanding and dispute now and in the future.

The paper asserts that Syria's sincere efforts have not always met with the appropriate response, but have often been faced with the fabrication of crises and the reiteration of hostile charges, which have become outdated and loathsome, such as the terrorism charge which, it says, is not based on any tangible, material evidence, but on assumptions which have nothing to do with reality.

The paper adds: Syria considers what is taking place inside Turkey as an internal affair. It is keen on maintaining relations of cooperation, understanding, and good neighborliness with the Turkish people and hopes to see stability and calm prevail in the entire region, including Turkey. One of the aims behind Syria's participation in the peace process is the endeavor to tackle the factors which increase tension and the danger of wars and conflicts in the Middle East and thus guarantee security, stability, and the restoration of rights.

TISHRIN continues: Applying the terrorism charge on Syria is not a new thing. Israel has invented and publicized this charge to discredit Damascus and influence its stands. Those behind this false charge will only reap failure despite their great efforts and the vast sums they have spent to deceive the world public. Proof of this is Syria's growing status and decisive role in influencing events in the region.

The paper warns that harping on the discordant tune of terrorism against Syria anew is useless, since it will not benefit anyone or enable hostile parties to achieve their aims against Damascus. The paper says: Syria, which seeks to improve its relations with Turkey, is also determined to gain all its water rights in accordance with international law. It will not be affected by provocative campaigns which seek to undermine confidence in the relations with Turkey and widen the gap of dispute and hostility with it.

TISHRIN expresses the hope that the voice of reason will triumph and that those Turkish officials dealing with Syria will stop leveling false charges and try instead to seriously tackle the existing problems in bilateral relations instead of attempting to defer these problems, avoid them, or suppress them by holding Damascus responsible for the internal crises in Turkey.

Concluding, the paper says that Syria has shown constant readiness to cooperate with anyone in Turkey who seeks to build solid relations with Syria based on mutual understanding, common interests, and sincere cooperation.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Lafra'i Gives Reasons for Not Meeting Pakistani Delegation

LD2502201996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Afghan delegation did not meet the Pakistani delegation in Tehran due to Pakistan's continued interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

After returning to the homeland, Dr. Najibollah Lafra'i, minister of state for foreign affairs, who had been to Tehran as the head of a high-ranking state delegation, told BAKHTAR that the Afghan delegation visited Iran at the invitation of Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati. The aim of the visit was to discuss further expansion of bilateral relations and political changes in the region.

He added: During separate meetings with the president of Iran, the president of the Majles, the minister of foreign affairs, the minister of construction jihad, and other officials of the country, talks were held on political changes in Afghanistan and the region. The Iranian side insisted on its stance on the consolidation of relations between the two countries, the cessation of foreign interference, and the measures taken by the leadership and the government of Afghanistan for the protection of the independence and state sovereignty of the country.

Esteemed Lafra'i added: The Iranian authorities anticipated that a meeting would take place between the Afghan and Pakistani delegations in Tehran. There was no problem from the Afghan side as regards the meeting, because we always wanted relations between the two countries. However, our precondition was that Pakistan should cease interference in the internal affairs of our country and should show goodwill to improve relations between the two countries. Because Pakistan has not ceased interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and has not shown goodwill to improve relations between the two countries, no meeting took place between the delegations of the two countries.

On their way home, Esteemed Lafra'i and the accompanying delegation met the prime minister and the foreign minister of Turkmenistan in Ashgabat and the foreign minister of Uzbekistan in Tashkent. During the meetings, talks were held on bilateral relations and emphasis was put on the cessation of foreign interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan: Taleban Spokesman— No Peace Until Kabul Regime Toppled

LD2402203396 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Until the infamous administration in Kabul is toppled, the restoration of peace and the establishment of an Islamic government in Afghanistan will be impossible, Taleban spokesman Mullah Khayrollah has told the BBC. He described as completely unfounded a claim by the Kabul government that Mullah Amir Mohammad, a Taleban commander, was killed during clashes the previous day. He described the claim as enemy propaganda aimed at boosting the morale of its troops. Answering a question about an allegation by the Kabul administration that his side has closed the road leading to Kabul City, he said that all roads controlled by the Taleban are open. Roads have been closed by Kabul administration soldiers who have mined them and and used local people as a shield.

Afghanistan: Rabbani, Hekmatyar Envoys Make Progress in Coalition Talks

LD2402210396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Over the past two days, representatives of Golboddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] and of President Borhanoddin Rabbani have held serious talks in Kabul and Sarobi. According to a report from a central news unit in Kabul, a government delegation headed by Dr. 'Abdorrahman, the minister of tourism and civil aviation, met with Hezb-e Eslami officials in Kabul on Thursday, and a Hezb-e Eslami delegation headed by Homayun Jarir met a government delegation in Sarobi yesterday. A government official who did not want to be identified said yesterday afternoon that talks held during the meetings concerned both sides' proposals for a coalition government, as well as the structure of such a coalition. He said that both sides discussed joint operations to dislodge the Taleban from the outskirts of Kabul, and the formation of a military coalition. The Afghan government official said that both sides were close to a final agreement and the talks have made good progress. Hekmatyar announced on Thursday that he was studying a Rabbani plan for the formation of a coalition government. Hezb-e Eslami has promised that it will secure the support of other members of the High Coordination Council for the coalition when final agreement is reached. Some time ago, Hezb-e Eslami signed an agreement with the government on the supply of electricity to Kabul from hydroelectric power stations controlled by Hezb-e Eslami, and on the permanent reopening of the Kabul-Jalalabad road.

Afghanistan: Opposition Party Denies Reaching Agreement With Government

LD2502150996 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto 0730 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Kabul Administration's claim that it has reached an agreement with Hezb-e Eslami on the formation of a government under which the premiership and three ministries will be given to Hezb-e Eslami is unfounded.

Ustad [title] Qariborrahman Sayid, the spokesman of Hezb-e Eslami, said Hezb-e Eslami had reached no written or verbal agreement with the Kabul Administration on the formation of [word indistinct] administration. He said a proposal had been presented to them on the formation of an interim government and that Hezb-e Eslami was studying it and wanted to seek the views of other High Coordination Council member parties.

Afghanistan: Taleban Rockets, Heavy Weapons Bombard Kabul

LD2302214096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The residential and commercial districts of western and southern Kabul have been hit by 17 Katyusha rockets and heavy weapons fire in the past 24 hours.

According to the Central News Unit from Kabul, government sources said that the rockets hit the residential areas of Dasht-e Azadegan, Barchi, and an area in West Kabul but did not lead to any casualties. Six houses, however, sustained damage.

Sources affiliated to the Afghan defense ministry said that the Taleban group was responsible for these latest attacks.

Afghanistan: Taleban Threaten To Target Residential Areas in North Kabul

LD2402212796 Tehran IRNA in English 2110 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Feb. 24, IRNA — At least four civilians were killed and six others wounded here tonight as a result of rockets fired by the Taleban militia on residential areas of the Afghan capital. According to the security commission of Kabul, some seven Katyusha rockets hit residential areas in the western and central parts of Kabul, destroying three houses.

It also said that a Taleban rocket hit the Bulgarian embassy here last night, causing some damage to the building. The Bulgarian embassy no longer functions in Kabul and has been closed since the last four years due to the instability in the Afghan capital.

The security commission said the Taleban militia has threatened to attack the trade and residential areas of 'Khayr-Khaneh' in north-western Kabul with long-range artillery. Khayr-Khaneh is crowded by Kabulis fleeing the Taleban's attacks on their houses from the south.

Afghanistan: Taleban Rocket Attack on Kabul; Air Force Retaliates

LD2502162696 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today [25 February] the Taleban fired rockets into residential areas of Kabul, killing two people and injuring a number of others. Bakhtar Information Agency reported that Ms. Benazir Bhutto's Taleban fired 14 rockets into residential areas of Kabul. As a result, two people were martyred and eight others were wounded. One residence was also damaged.

Air Force planes bombed Talemi Markaz in Chahar Asiab as well as Taleban fortifications in the south of Kabul this morning. Twelve of the so-called Taleban were killed and their two fortifications were destroyed. The warplanes of the country's Air Force also bombed the Taleban fortifications and concentrations to the southwest of Kabul this afternoon. No report has been received about the details.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Radio Reports on Dhaka Clashes, Situation Around Country

BK2502165196 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The situation in Dhaka city was better today, despite massive opposition picketing with explosions of bombs and crackers. A large number of rickshaws and autorickshaws and a good number of BRTC [Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation] and private buses were plying on different routes of the capital. The attendance in government and private offices was also comparatively better; besides, insurance companies and other financial institutions were open.

The opposition leaders and workers staged rallies in front of the National Press Club and Baitul Mukarram Mosque and brought out separate processions in support of their demands. The BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] and its front organizations also brought out processions in support of the government and against the opposition program.

Police sources say opposition activists hurled several bombs on their (?pathway) to the Secretariat in the morning. Police fired tear gas shells to disperse the unruly mob. At least 50 persons, including one policeman, were injured in clashes between opposition political activists and law enforcing agencies in different parts of the city. Police arrested 37 persons on charges of creating anarchy and violation of law and order situation.

Railway sources say the rail communications remained disrupted today due to opposition blockade at different points. They said some trains left the Kamalapur station this morning but remained stranded at different places. Launch services were disrupted due to shortage of passengers. All the international flights, excepting one, operated as usual. Out of scheduled 11 domestic flights, seven operated normally.

The activities of Chittagong port continued normally today, despite programs given by some opposition political parties. Some ships anchored and some others left the Chittagong port. State Minister for Shipping Shahjahan Seraj said this when he visited the port this morning. The minister expressed satisfaction over normal functioning of the port despite some adverse situation. He directed the officers, employees, and workers who have not reported as yet to join their duty immediately, and otherwise stern action will be taken against them. Fisheries and Live Stock Minister Abdullah Al Noman, special envoy to the prime minister Morshed Khan, and Members of Parliament Amir Khusro, Mahmud Chowdhury, Najibul Hassan, (Mahesh Hazari), Wahidul Alam, and Ghulam Akbar Khondaker also visited the Chittagong port today.

Our Khulna representative says there was no report of any untoward incidents there. Normal production continued in the mills and factories in and around Khulna city. The Mangla port has been functioning as usual; however, all kinds of vehicles went off the road since yesterday.

Our Rajshahi representative says the situation was peaceful. There was no report of any untoward incident from any part of the city. Opposition parties brought out a small procession in the city, but no clashes took places. Excepting rickshaws, all other motor vehicles went off the road today. Most of the shops in the city remained open. Offices and courts functioned normally.

Bangladesh: Over 100 Injured in Government, Opposition Clashes

BK2502122796 Hong Kong AFP in English 1209 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Report by Nadeem Qadir]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, Feb 25 (AFP) — More than 110 people were injured Sunday in clashes in Bangladesh between government and opposition supporters while four senior opposition leaders were arrested.

At least 40 people, six with bullet wounds, were injured Sunday in the southeastern port city of Chittagong when armed supporters and security forces led by three ministers from Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) tried to force open the port.

Opposition activists at the port, which has been closed since Saturday when the opposition began a three-day nationwide strike, resisted the attempt during which both sides used firearms, witnesses said.

One 16-year-old pedicab driver was stated to be in serious condition at a local hospital.

The opposition activists fled after police intervened, but the ministers were unable to get the port started as essential staff were absent.

Some of the worst violence was seen in the capital Dhaka and suburban Tongi town when some 60 people were injured during a series of clashes between opposition and government supporters, as well as police who used tear gas and truncheons, witnesses said.

In old Dhaka's district court, unidentified people set off homemade bombs when a group of lawyers demonstrated forcing judges and magistrates to lock themselves in chambers for safety, witnesses said.

In suburban Jatrabari area a march by the opposition fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party came under fire from suspected pro-government supporters leaving 10 people injured, witnesses said.

On Sunday police arrested Muhammad Nasim, organising secretary of the main opposition Awami League together with former vice president and opposition Jatiya Party (JP) leader Moudud Ahmed.

Anwar Hossain Manju, JP's secretary general and editor of the mass circulation Ittefaq newspaper was also arrested during the swoop, police said.

Another Awami League leader Motia Chowdhury was arrested Saturday for inciting violence while picketing along with two other women members.

Police said all four were in the high-security Dhaka Central Jail and each had been given a one-month detention order under tough security laws which allow detention without charge for up to 120 days.

The four detainees are the first senior opposition leaders to be arrested since the opposition started its campaign 22 months ago aimed at forcing Zia's resignation and elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman, whose house was raided overnight, escaped arrest.

He condemned the government action saying "such arrests, repression and autocratic action will further worsen the crisis."

He said the crisis would not be solved even if Zia amended the constitution to allow for future polls to be held under a caretaker government, as some observers speculate.

The goal of the latest three-day strike, which the opposition have called a civil disobedience or "non-cooperation campaign," is to force the scrapping of the results of the controversial February 15 parliamentary elections, won by the BNP, but boycotted by the opposition.

The streets were virtually clear off traffic, except for buses and taxis operated by pro-government supporters, and shops, businesses and schools remained shut.

Young ruling party supporters festooned buses as they sped through guarded streets in an apparent challenge to the opposition.

Top Bangladeshi business leader Salman F. Rahman said the business community, which has been hard hit by the continued unrest and a long series of opposition called strikes, had convened a meeting this week to discuss what action it can take to save companies.

Bangladesh: 4 Senior Opposition Leaders Arrested

BK2502090996 Hong Kong AFP in English 0718 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, Feb 25 (AFP) — Four senior Bangladeshi opposition leaders were arrested and police fought against activists throwing home-made explosives as the opposition's 72-hour general strike moved into its second day, police said Sunday.

The four were detained under the tough Special Powers Act of 1974, which permits detention without specific charges for up to 120 days.

Muhammad Nasim, organising secretary of the main opposition Awami League together with former vice president and opposition Jatiya Party (JP) leader Moudud Ahmed were arrested in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Anwar Hossain Manju, JP's secretary general and editor of the mass circulation Ittefaq newspaper was also arrested during the swoop, police said.

Another Awami League leader Motia Chowdhury was arrested Saturday for inciting violence while picketing along with two other women members.

Police said all four were in the high-security Dhaka Central Jail and had each been given a one-month detention.

The goal of the latest three-day opposition strike is to force the cancellation of the controversial February 15 parliamentary elections, which were won by the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) but were labeled as "seriously flawed" by independent observers.

The streets were virtually clear of traffic except for buses and community taxis operated by pro-government supporters, and shops, businesses and schools remained shut.

Police and security forces were out in force to protect the state-run buses as the opposition's civil disobedience or "non-cooperation" campaign moved into its second day, with small groups of pickets roaming around.

In Dhaka's Topkhana Road area, police fired tear gas to disperse opposition activists throwing home-made bombs at two buses that were operated by suspected BNP supporters.

No injuries were reported.

The four detainees are the first senior opposition leaders to be arrested since the opposition started its campaign 22 months ago aimed at forcing the resignation of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and fresh elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Two of the detainees, Ahmed and Manju, were previously arrested for graft after Zia's government came to power in 1991. They were both freed on bail and have cases pending against them in the trial courts.

Newspapers said the homes of some other leaders were also raided overnight, but most politicians had gone into hiding. Opposition sources claimed that 200 of their leaders and supporters had been arrested.

The wife of Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman confirmed their house had been searched, and said her husband was "not home."

Meanwhile Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina Wajed condemned the arrests of all opposition supporters and called for their immediate release.

The Home Ministry has warned against "illegal" and "terrorist" activities by certain political groups and BNP secretary-general Abdus Salam Talukder called on his rivals to shun the path of confrontation and violence.

"Certain opposition parties by abusing their democratic rights have made an illegal and undesirable call for non-cooperation with the government," he said in a statement.

Ruling party sources said late Saturday that after winning 208 of the 300 parliamentary seats, Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali would ask the MPs to take their oaths.

Zia too was likely take fresh oath as prime minister and form a new government by mid-March.

At least one man died and more than 100 others were injured Saturday in clashes between strikers, pro-government supporters and the police amid sporadic bomb blasts in Dhaka.

Bangladesh: 'Stern Action' Promised Against Unlawful Activities

BK2302163096 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The government expressed a firm resolve to take appropriate legal action to prevent unlawful and terrorist activities by certain political parties in the name of political programs. A Home Ministry press release issued in Dhaka today said that some political parties in the name of their programs engaged in unlawful activities, even terrorist activities. Pursuing these programs, they engaged in heinous activities, including intimidating people by bomb blasts and arson, destroying vehicles, and damaging business firms. These political parties attempted to disrupt people's normal life.

The press release said that the government will take stern action as provided by the law against any individual or individuals for unlawful or terrorist activities. Appropriate security measures have been taken to ensure free movement for all vehicles. The government hopes that the people of the country will reject these unlawful activities and maintain normal life.

The press release said that the government will provide appropriate compensation to vehicle owners if their vehicles are damaged while using them to continue their normal daily life. Owners of damaged vehicles have been asked to contact the additional secretary of the Home Ministry.

Bangladesh: Editorial Raps Government for 'Farcical Election'

BK2302153696 Dhaka JANAKANTHA in Bengali 19 Feb 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Live in the Present and Save the Country"]

[FBIS Translated Text] What is going to happen in the country now? The question still persists in the minds of the people. Although the election is over, it did not help remove the people's apprehensions. Despite the government's tall claims, one can only say that the election was held merely as a formality. Could the Constitution or democracy have been upheld in the true sense? Not only the people of this country, but the whole world will ridicule what has happened in this country in the name of elections. After having witnessed the farce of the 15 February election, who is going to believe that Bangladesh is a country with numerous achievements to its credit, including the bloody language movement of 1952, which also occurred in this very month of February; the great people's uprising of 1969; and the armed war of independence of 1971, which caused a sensation throughout the world? No one knows where the creation of a nominal government and the setting up of a false parliament by belying all the records of our dauntless democratic struggles and undoing all our achievements will lead us. Neither the people of this country nor those worldwide believe that the government could not have foreseen that the consequences of holding an one-party election were going to be very grave for the country. The opposition announced a "people's curfew" on election day and the voters kept away from voting. Apparently, the opposition's authority was established in the country on that day. In effect, the government did not exist after this, nor did it have any legality. On top of this, the ruling party shamelessly held a victory procession, which took the whole world by surprise. Victory over what or whose victory?

Neither the foreign press, radio and television, the election observers teams, foreign diplomats, nor the donor countries felt that the election was legitimate. In this age of modern science and technology and satellite-based electronic media, it is not possible to conceal or distort the facts relating to either an election or any other internal political event in a country. Bangladesh television showed people standing in queues and voting in an orderly manner. The comments of several voters were also included. The reports were clearly fabricated and stage-managed. People were surprised, however, when soon after they watched and listened to the foreign media broadcasts. Nothing remained a secret. It does not need to be described how the people felt the next day after reading reports on the election in the national dailies and learning about it through foreign press and agency reports. Everyone has come to know now that the election was characterized by: 1. a widespread boycott by the electorate; 2. massive refraining by election personnel from carrying out their election duties; 3. bombing and burning of polling booths; 4. massive fraud with ballot papers and so on.

The contradictory reports on the election as carried by Bangladesh radio and television on the one hand and local and foreign press and agencies on the other also revealed some more details about the election. These reports expose: helping rejected [as published] candidates win in the election through a "media coup" [last two words in English]; the "magic" of the victory of the official candidate despite the fact that the relevant election papers did not reach the voting booths; the ending of voting in some places although there were no voters, ballot boxes, and ballots; the manhandling of candidates despised by the people; the insulting of paramilitary Ansar forces; the declaring 48 candidates as uncontested winners; the widespread clashes and violence; the nonpublication of the unofficial results of 85 seats out of the 250 because there were complaints about them; the decision to hold fresh voting for 84 seats; and the withholding of the publication of the results of 35 seats and so on.

The fraud in the current election has shattered all past election records, including the ones held under the autocratic regime. A JANAKANTHA report on 17 February cited British press as saying that the Bangladeshi people kept aloof from the 15 February election. Another report said that the donor countries consortium has decided to suggest the holding of interim elections by next June under its observation. Yet another JANAKANTHA report said that even diplomats sympathetic to Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP] were dumbfounded by the widespreads incidents of seizing voting booths and stuffing ballot boxes with forged ballots. They had supported and sympathized with this election only on one condition, that is, to hold the election in a free and fair manner. By conducting such an election, the BNP has itself proved that it is not possible to ensure a free and impartial election without a caretaker government.

In fact, domestic and foreign commentaries and analyses on this election have only bolstered the justification for the opposition's long-standing demand — to hold elections under a caretaker government — and created an opportunity for it. In an attempt to utilize this opportunity, the opposition has announced a three-day countrywide noncooperation agitation immediately after the 'Id al-Fitr, from 24 to 26 February, to support their demand for the government's resignation, the formation of a caretaker government by the president, and the holding of fresh elections under it within 90 days. Perhaps the power-haughty attitude of the ruling party is the main hurdle in the way of arriving at an understanding with the opposition. JANAKANTHA report says that many top BNP leaders were irritated by the election results and the low voter turnout. The ruling party might face strong pressure from within the party to revoke the farcical election and hold fresh and acceptable elections by ensuring the participation of all parties. Moreover, the ruling party will also realize that it is going to be difficult for it to secure the sympathy of donor countries at their Paris meeting in July if it fails to convince the donors of the credibility and legality of the election. Instead of resorting to the farce of running the country's administration on the basis of results of a massively forged and fraudulent election, the ruling party should immediately come into long-awaited agreement with the opposition and rid the countrymen of all uncertainties and apprehensions. Let good sense prevail in the ruling party before the country is ruined and before its image is totally obliterated from the minds of the people. They should live in the present and save the country and its democracy.

India

India: 'Unprovoked Firing' by Pakistani Troops in Kashmir Reported

BK2502155096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked firing in the Ranbirsinghpura sector of the border in Jammu and Kashmir last night. According to an official spokesman, the firing started around 2100 [1530 GMT] from a border post of Pakistan and continued for about two hours. The BSF [Border Security Force] returned the fire. No loss of life was caused on the Indian side. The spokesman said the apparent aim of the Pakistani firing was to help infiltration of militants into Indian territory.

India: President Sharma Addresses Parliament

BK2602091096 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in Hindi 0530 GMT 26 Feb 96

[Address by Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma to a joint session of Parliament at the Central Hall of Parliament in New Delhi — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] Honorable members: Welcome to this session of Parliament. The 10th Lok Sabha has substantially accomplished its task and the country has been guided through momentous changes in every sphere. I take this opportunity to congratulate all of you for your dedicated service to the nation. The nation celebrated the 125th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, which was marked by a large number of significant activities in different parts of the country and abroad. An important landmark was the institution of the Gandhi Peace Prize for social, political, and economic transformation through nonviolence and other Gandhian methods. The first Gandhi prize was conferred upon Dr. Julius K. Nyerere. The anniversary concluded with a solemn function on 31 January 1996 at the Bapu Kutir in Valmiki Mandir Complex in New Delhi, where Gandhiji often used to stay.

The law and order situation in the country is under control. The government will continue to exercise more vigilance in the coming months to ensure that relations between different communities and groups remain harmonious. Terrorism and insurgency have been controlled. Separatist tendencies have been contained to a very large extent. In this context, the performance of the security forces has been creditable, but the arms dropping incident in Purulia, West Bengal highlights the need for constant vigilance. In this connection, investigations into the incident and its national and international ramifications are being pursued vigorously. Steps are being taken to ensure the effective policing of the country's air corridors.

In Jammu and Kashmir — due to the concerted drive of the security forces against militants and foreign mercenaries, coupled with the acceleration of development activities — there is a perceptible change in the overall situation. The revival of political activity has been made possible. Parliament passed a balanced budget in 1995-96, and for the first time in many years the planned outlay is expected to be spent fully on development schemes without any diversions to meet the nonplan resources gap. Though the government had to seek a further extension of president's rule up to 17 July 1996, it remains committed to restoring a representative government in the state as soon as possible.

In the northeast, several initiatives have been taken to tackle the region's economic backwardness. The Northeast Council has emerged as an effective institution for implementing development activities. The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution was amended to give more power to the autonomous district councils of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Districts in Assam.

The economic scenario has been continuously improving. The GDP showed a substantially higher growth rate in the year subsequent to 1991-92. In 1994-95, this increased to 6.3 percent. Gross domestic savings at current prices improved in 1994-95 to 24.4 percent of GDP. Industrial production increased by 12 percent in the first six months of this year over the corresponding period of last year, showing a notable revival.

Along with this, exports have gone up another 24.17 percent in the first eight months of the current financial year. Imports have also grown as a consequence of the overall growth of the economy, and the industrial sector in particular. Foreign exchange reserves are at a comfortable level of about $16 billion. The annual rate of inflation, which had almost reached 17 percent in August 1991, has been brought under control. This year the inflation rate has been brought down to around 5 percent, the lowest in the last seven years.

As a result of strong support for the agricultural sector, food grain production and stocks have reached a very comfortable level. The availability of various mass consumption items has been maintained. The public distribution system has been strengthened, and by introducing the revamped public distribution system additional concessions have been given to those living in the poorest areas of the country.

The small-scale industrial sector accounts for about 40 percent of manufacturing output and 34 percent of the country's total exports. It has recorded a growth of 10 percent during 1994-95 and accounted for the employment of 14.6 million people by the end of 1994-95. Export of goods by this sector are estimated to have increased from 138.83 billion rupees [Rs.] in 1991-92 to Rs. 264 billion in 1994-95. In the khadi [homespun cotton cloth] and village industry sector, sales have reached a level of over 40.69 billion in 1994-95. This sector accounted for the employment of 5.346 million people in 1994-95. Rs. 10 billion in consortium credit has been given to KVIC [Khadi and Village Industries Commission] for the first time this year. Of this, KVIC had sanctioned projects costing about Rs. 2.35 billion by the end of January 1996 to generate additional employment for about 100,000 people.

Our agricultural strategy has been to increase production through the best use of soil and water in an integrated fashion. During the Eighth Plan, Rs. 11 billion have been allocated for the restructured National Watershed Development Project for rain-fed areas. The coverage of drought-prone areas under the program has been increased to 946 blocs of 149 districts in 13 states. Coverage of the Desert Development Program has been further extended to 227 blocs of 36 districts in seven states. These programs are being implemented with the active participation of communities in the watershed.

Food grain production in 1994-95 achieved a new record of 102 million tonnes. The production of sugar also reached a record level of nearly 14.585 million tonnes in 1994-95. The government has built a buffer stock of 500,000 tons of sugar this year as a precaution against possible fluctuations in availability and price. Disbursement of agricultural credit through institutional agencies is expected to reach a level of Rs. 264.5 billion in 1995-96 compared to Rs. 211.13 billion in 1994-95. The consumption of chemical fertilizers during 1994-95 was 13.564 million tonnes and is expected to increase to 15.664 million tonnes in 1995-96.

The government has been acutely sensitive to the needs of the poor. Programs for the direct alleviation of poverty have been expanded, as reflected in substantial increases in allocations for rural development, employment generation, housing, rural water supply, etc. Under the Indira Awas Yojana [housing scheme], about 2 million houses were built between 1985-86 and 1994-95. In 1995-96 this program has been accelerated by undertaking a massive program to build 1 million houses with a budget of 10 billion. This is progressing in full swing. Steps have also been taken to augment housing facilities for other sections as well as government employees.

The prime minister's Rozegar Yojana [employment scheme], aimed at providing self-employment opportunities for educated but unemployed youths, has helped 196,154 people in 1994-95. For 1995-96, loans under the scheme are planned to reach 260,000 people.

As the honorable members know, the government has launched the National Social Assistance Program to provide for old age pensions, maternity benefits, and lump sum payments upon the death of the primary breadwinner in poor families. Complementing this package is a pioneering group life insurance scheme that includes subsidized premiums for the poor. An integrated urban poverty eradication program was launched in November 1995 to tackle the problem of the urban poor in an integrated manner in all 345 Class Two towns with a population ranging from 50,000 to 100,000. A provision of Rs. 1 billion has been made for the program in the current financial year.

The government has strengthened the role and powers of the panchayats and nagar palikas [rural and urban bodies] in all centrally-sponsored schemes operating at the district level and below. This initiative has also ensured the emergence of more than 1 million women as leaders and decisionmakers at the grass-roots level. Similarly, the states have been asked to empower these bodies with adequate financial and administrative responsibilities.

Substantial enhancements have been made in the allocation of special central assistance schemes for special component plans for high school scholarships, the National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, and aid to voluntary organizations. The government has also revised the rates of maintenance and other allowances under the post high school scholarship scheme for students from schedules castes or tribes. A National Commission for Scavengers has been set up to monitor the implementation of the national scheme for the liberation and rehabilitation of scavengers still engaged in night soil removal. Since the inception of the scheme, about 94,000 such people have been trained in other vocations and 250,000 have been rehabilitated.

The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Commission has disbursed Rs. 1.3164 billion so far for self-employment ventures. To enable other backward class candidates to compete on equal terms with general candidates in various recruitment tests and examinations, the government has provided financial assistance to 122 coaching centers so far. The National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation had established links with state-level agencies. Loans are being disbursed for self-employment. The Waqf [Muslim Endowment] Act of 1995 for the effective and democratic administration of Muslim endowment boards has been brought into force as of 1 January 1996.

The Equal Opportunity, Protection of Rights, and Full Participation Act of 1995 has been enacted to provide equal opportunities for those with disabilities. It has also been decided to set up a National Finance and Development Corporation for the Disabled with an authorized capital of Rs. 4 billion. A bill to set up a national trust to provide total care for the mentally retarded and those with cerebral palsy has been introduced in the Lok Sabha.

The ongoing immunization of children against six vaccine- preventable diseases has already yielded encouraging results. In keeping with the global goal of eradicating polio by 2000, a supplemental dose of oral polio vaccine was administrated to more than 75 million children up to age three throughout the country on 9 December 1995. The exercise was repeated on 20 January 1996. Pulse polio immunization will also be continued in the future.

The allocation for the education sector has been steadily increased as part of the government's commitment to achieving the target of allocating 6 percent of GDP by 2000. To realize the goal of universal elementary education, 110 districts will be brought under the ambit of the district primary education program by the end of the Eighth Plan. A national elementary education mission has been launched to cover all children up to age 14 by the turn of the century. As part of the national literacy mission, the total literacy campaign has been extended to another 368 districts and the post-literacy campaign to 159 districts in the country. A major national program of nutritional support for children in primary schools — covering about 110 million children from classes one to five over three years — was launched on 15 August 1995.

There has been a remarkable improvement in the industrial relations scenario in the country over the last five years. There has been a significant decrease in the number of strikes and lockouts and the number of working days lost. The government is committed to implementing successfully the employees pension scheme introduced in November 1995. For the first time, this provides life-long social security to about 19 million industrial workers and their families. To bring about an arbitration law in line with international thinking on this subject, an ordinance called the Arbitration and Conciliation Ordinance of 1996 has been promulgated. With this and other steps taken to establish alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, it is hoped that India will soon emerge as a pioneer in this field in the South Asian region.

The achievements of our scientists in the past year have been noteworthy and give us confidence for the future. The successful launches of the INSAT-2C and IRS-1C satellites last December once again demonstrated our ability to design, build, and operate state- of-the-art space systems. This will be vital for the development of our telecommunications, television, meteorological, and resources survey programs. We plan to launch INSAT-2D in 1996-97 and INSAT-2E and IRS-1D in 1997-98. We have also made good progress in developing a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle to launch our INSAT class satellites.

During the year, the country's 10th nuclear power reactor at Kakrapar commenced operations and was stabilized satisfactorily. The research reactors at Trombay have supplied more than 60,000 kits for diagnosis and treatment to more than 300 medical institutions all over the country.

During 1995-96, the situation in some parts of India's immediate neighborhood remained uncertain in terms of security. Pakistan's continuing attempts to acquire sophisticated weaponry and uranium enrichment technology have been a matter of serious concern for us. These attempts heighten tension in our region and are likely to trigger an arms race. We have every confidence in the capability of our armed forces to defend the nation, and the government is determined to ensure their capability in this regard. I am sure the honorable members will join me in this context in commending the armed forces for their professionalism and dedication. [applause]

As a result of the concerted efforts of our scientists engaged in defense research, the Light Combat Aircraft was dedicated to the nation in November 1995. Test flights will commence by the end of this year. The development of the Arjun main battle tank has been completed with a view to its induction. [applause].

The Defense Research and Development Organization has developed a high performance supercomputer using multiprocessor technology. This meets a long-felt need and enhances our self-reliance in this field.

In the foreign affairs sphere, our relations with our neighbors have been further strengthened. Our traditionally close ties with Bhutan were reinforced during the year. A visit to India by former Nepalese Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari in April 1995 and current Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba earlier this month contributed to developing closer mutual understanding. The prime minister's inauguration of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital in the Maldives in April 1995 is testimony to our commitment to friendship and cooperation with that country. Our relations with Sri Lanka were marked by cordiality and trust. Our trade with Bangladesh increased, as did contacts between the people of the two countries.

The momentum of our relations with China was maintained through continuing dialogue at the highest levels.

Our efforts have resulted in the promotion of good relations with all our neighbors in South Asia with the sole exception of Pakistan. We urge the Government of Pakistan to eschew its path of confrontation with India, and to respond positively to our repeated offer of a bilateral dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the Simla Agreement.

A landmark in the progress of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was achieved last year with the launching of the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement on 7 December 1995. The signing of a trilateral memorandum of understanding on transit by India, Iran, and Turkmenistan — seeking to establish a viable sea and surface route between India and Central Asia for commercial and other links — was an important event in the development of links with Central Asia.

ASEAN has agreed to full dialogue partnership status for India. This reflects the growing mutually beneficial relationship between India and ASEAN.

Our relations with the Russian Federation remains close. Further areas of cooperation in economic, cultural, and other fields have been identified.

Ties between India and the United States registered steady growth, particularly in economic and commercial areas.

Political and economic cooperation with countries in Africa was promoted through high-level visits to and from Mali, Mauritius, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Burkino Faso, and Ghana.

India took the lead in articulating the political, economic, social and other concerns of the developing countries in international forums like the World Summit for Social Development in Denmark in March 1995, the UN General Assembly's 50th anniversary special commemorative meeting in October 1995, and the 11th Nonaligned Summit in Colombia the same month.

Consistent with its commitment to the objective of complete nuclear disarmament within a specified timeframe, India is actively participating in the negotiations for a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. At the same time, we view the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as an obstacle to universal nuclear disarmament as it seeks to legitimize the nuclear arsenal of nuclear weapon states.

As this session of Parliament will be brief, only essential legislations will be taken up during the session. Some ordinances promulgated since the last session will be placed before Parliament. A statement of the Indian Government's estimated receipts and expenditures for FY 1996-97 will be submitted to you for the purpose of voting on account authorizing expenditures for part of the year. A vote on accounts in respect to states under president's rule also needs to be passed.

The government's policies have put the country on the path of growth, enabling the people to realize their potential. The strength of the country lies in the strength of its economy and the unity of its people. During the last four and half years, your dedication, wisdom, and vision have left an imprint that will guide the nation into a brighter tomorrow. I commend you in your task in this session and wish you success.

Hail India! [applause]

India: Al-Faran Group—Abducted Westerners in Army Custody

BK2302135596 Hong Kong AFP in English 1332 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Srinagar, India, Feb 23 (AFP) — A Moslem rebel group which abducted four Westerners in Kashmir in July said here Friday that the hostages were in the custody of Indian soldiers following a gunbattle in December.

"It is necessary to mention that the four tourists were taken into custody by the army after the encounter which left our chief commander dead," an Urdu-language statement by the Al-Faran rebel group said.

"There is no credence with government propaganda that the four are with us," the one-page statement added.

Army sources have confirmed that Al-Faran leader Abdul Hamid Turki and four other members of the group were killed during a gunbattle in the southern district of Anantnag on December 4, but have denied taking over the hostages.

In another development, former Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah told reporters in the southern city of Jammu that the army could secure the release of the hostages within a day.

"Indian security forces have the capacity to get them released within 24 hours but the action may involve 10 percent risk," he said.

"The representatives of the countries to which the hostages belong should take a decision whether they are interested in getting these hostages released soon," Abdullah, chief of the powerful regional National Conference party said.

Meanwhile, Kashmir Governor K.V. Krishna Rao on Friday ruled out military intervention but said the captives — two Britons, an American and a German, were unharmed.

"The hostages are quite safe. Our policy is the same. We will pursue diplomatic efforts to secure their release," he said. "No army action will be taken, keeping in view their safety."

Two German tourists who arrived in Kashmir offering themselves in exchange for the hostages told AFP Friday that they were optimistic that talks with the militants would bear fruit.

"We established contact two days ago but then it snapped. We are hopeful that something concrete will emerge tomorrow," Jurgen Sick told AFP. "We have reason to believe that the four are safe."

The rebels beheaded a fifth hostage in the first week of August.

The Indian Government believes the Al-Faran is a frontline group belonging to the Harkat-ul-Ansar rebels, who kidnapped two British hikers in Kashmir two years ago.

The hostages were released unharmed after 17 days.

India: Kashmir Governor—Abducted Foreigners 'Safe and Sound'

BK2302160596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jammu and Kashmir governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, has said efforts are on to seek the safe release of the four foreign tourists through diplomatic channels. Speaking to newsmen at the 'Id Milan [a banquet hosted at the end of the holy month of Ramadan] party hosted by him in Srinagar, he said all the hostages are safe and sound. General Rao said the people in the state want elections and his government is ready for that.

India: Spokesman Denies Hostages 'Captured' by Forces in Kashmir

BK2402155096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jammu and Kashmir Government has once again appealed to the abductors of the four foreign tourists to respond to worldwide appeals and release the tourists. An official spokesman in Jammu, reacting to a report published in some newspapers, said the hostages continue to be with the abductors and at no stage were they captured by the security forces.

Iran

Iran: Vice President Delays Visit to Syria for Second Time

NC2402152496 Paris AFP in English 1456 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Feb 24 (AFP) — Iranian First Vice President Hasan Habibi, who was expected to arrive here on Saturday, has delayed his visit to Syria for a second time, an Iranian official said.

"Mr. Habibi has been occupied for a few days by the elections for an Iranian consultative council because he heads the commission selecting candidates," the official said.

Habibi was to lead a delegation of economic officials and co- chair an annual meeting of the two countries' joint commission.

Habibi was originally due to visit Syria in early January but the trip was cancelled to protest Syria's support for the United Arab Emirates in a dispute with Iran over three Gulf islands.

Relations between Iran and Syria, its principal Middle East ally, have deteriorated since Damascus restarted peace negotiations with Israel in December. But Iranian leaders have been trying to play down the differences and maintain good ties.

Iran: Habibi, Velayati To Visit Syria 27 Feb

LD2402202196 Tehran IRNA in English 1930 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Feb. 24, IRNA — Iran's First Vice-President Hasan Habibi is due to arrive here on Tuesday for a two-day visit at the invitation of the Syrian government.

According to Iran's charge d'affaires in Damascus, Seyyed Mohammad 'Ali Hoseyni, the Iranian vice-president will hold talks in the Syrian capital with President Hafez al-Asad and Vice-President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam. Habibi, who is to be accompanied by Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and other senior officials, will discuss with Syrian officials, expansion of bilateral cooperation, and exchange views on regional and international developments.

Hoseyni said that Habibi's visit, which was originally scheduled to start on Sunday February 25, was deferred to February 27, by the mutual consent of the Iranian and Syrian authorities.

Iran: Radio Hails International Court Ruling on Airbus

LD2402114396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1102 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] After many years of legal struggle in international forums and The Hague International Court, the U.S. government has been forced to pay compensation for shooting down an Airbus plane belonging to the Islamic Republic of Iran. [passage omitted]

The settlement of the Airbus case is an example of justice being served concerning the rights of the noble people of Iran in connection with America. In the meantime, Iran's protest against the United States over the destruction of three of our country's oil platforms in the Persian Gulf is still being pursued, and The Hague Court is to deal with it in the next Christian calendar month.

Iran: Bomb Blasts in Israel Signal 'Growth' of Intifadah

LD2502181696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1558 GMT 25 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] This morning, the explosion of two powerful bombs in the occupied territories of

Palestine shook the occupying Zionists. In the wake of these explosions, all of occupied Palestine was engulfed with a fear of a continuation of this kind of anti-Zionist attack, placing the Zionists in a passive position.

The first explosion took place in a bus carrying military personnel of the Zionist regime in the center of Jerusalem. One hour later, as the Zionists were investigating the cause of the explosion and carrying away the bodies of those killed or injured, a second explosion occurred in a costal town situated 40 km to the south of the Zionist regime's capital. As a result of these two explosions, nearly 90 Zionists were killed or injured.

No one other than an unknown person, identifying himself as a member of the Hamas movement, has so far claimed responsibility for these two explosions. However, a realistic assessment of the time and place at which the explosions occurred and the past record of inhuman measures taken by the Zionist regime, especially the continuation of its expansionist policy since the autonomy elections, gives rise to the possibility that these explosions were a reaction to the escalation of Tel Aviv's inhuman and terrorist activities. [passage omitted]

In reality, the intensification of the regime's policy of building settlements in order to occupy the remaining parts of east Jerusalem can strengthen the motivation of Palestinians to continue their anti-Zionist struggles. From the viewpoint of the combatant groups, 'Arafat himself has been guilty of perpetuating Tel Aviv's expansionist policies. To block Tel Aviv's policy to create divisions between the Palestinians, these groups are trying to carry out their practical struggles outside the autonomous region and in the occupied territories of 1948, so that they can, on the one hand, demonstrate the Zionist regime's inability to stop the anti-Zionist struggles and, on the other hand, reveal to the world the growth of the Islamic intifadah in the occupied territories and the fact that this new movement holds the initiative in forging the ultimate destiny of Palestine.

Iran: IRNA on Israeli Army Truck, Palestinian Bus Incident

LD2502114596 Tehran IRNA in English
1028 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Athens, Feb. 25, IRNA — An Israeli Army truck deliberately hit an Arab bus carrying Palestinian workers returning to the Gaza Strip Sunday morning, injuring more than 20 workers, five of them seriously.

A dispatch from Al-QODS said the incident occured 8:30 GMT about 20 km north of the Erez checkpoint on the Gaza Strip's northern edge.

It is believed that the incident was a retaliation against the two bus-bomb attacks that were carried out earlier today in AL-QODS (Jerusalem) and Ashkalan and resulted in the death of 26 Israelis, many of them soldiers, and the injury of as many as 60 people.

Moreover, head of the Zionist regime, Shimon Peres, looking grim deamnded after an emergency cabinet meeting that Palestine Authority Chairman Yasser 'Arafat carry out a determined crackdown on the infrastructure and the political leadership of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad.

'Arafat earlier labelled the two incidents as "terrorist acts" and offered condolences to bereaved Israeli families.

It is expected that PNA police, under direct instructions from 'Arafat, will launch a wave of arrests against Islamic activists in the Gaza Strip and the autonomous enclaves in the West Bank.

'Arafat's anger at the two bomb attacks stems from his fears that developments as such could undermine Peres' chances of winning the Israeli general election.

For its part, the Zionist regime has cancelled a scheduled trip by 'Arafat to the West Bank town of Nablus. The movement of Arafat in the West Bank and Gaza Strip must be coordinated with the Zionist regime in advance.

Iran: Radio Says Iraqi Regime Not To Benefit From Killings

LD2402122596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian
1106 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The death of General Husayn Kamil Hasan, Saddam Husayn's son-in-law, and his brother, both of whom fled Iraq for Jordan around six months ago, has caused widespread surprise and has given rise to several questions.

The two men, together with a number of their family members, were killed just three days after returning to Baghdad, following the news that they had been pardoned by Saddam Husayn.

According to reports published by Iraqi sources, they were killed by some of their kinsmen who objected to their escape and considered it an act of treason against Iraq.

The official IRAQI NEWS AGENCY has announced that some family members of General Husayn Kamil Hasan and his brother, Colonel Saddam Kamil Hasan, killed them because they were angry about their escape to Jordan.

Several theories have so far been put forward about Husayn Kamil Hasan's escape to Jordan and his eventual return to Iraq. Some say this was a premeditated plan by Iraq; others claim that the whole thing was designed by America, Israel, and Jordan; while others believe that this was an independent move by Husayn Kamil Hasan.

All of these theories are backed by their own peculiar mode of reasoning, and the killing of Saddam Husayn's dissident generals lends more credence to some of them and rejects some others. No matter what prompted General Husayn Kamil Hasan and his brother to escape from Iraq and then return home, their killing will not produce beneficial results for Iraq or Saddam Husayn's government.

Reports issued by Iraq attempt to blame the killings on Kamil Hasan's family, who were unhappy about the betrayal of Iraq.

The Iraqi generals left Iraq six months ago. They contacted UN officials and disclosed some Iraqi military secrets. The United States formulated its plans for confronting Baghdad after reaping the maximum benefit from General Husayn Kamil Hasan's escape and the intelligence reports he provided.

Husayn Kamil Hasan returned to Baghdad when he was no longer the architect of Iraq's military programs. Instead, he was a spent force, who had in fact disrupted and undermined all these programs. [as heard]

Against this background, the crimes of Kamil Hasan are being emphasized in order to justify his killing, but the negative consequences of this incident could affect the Iraqi Government's programs.

The Iraqi Government has attempted to show no sign of support for the killings, but in view of the structure of the Iraqi state and its reliance on coercion, political observers can never consider Iraq to be an innocent party in the whole affair.

In recent months, the Iraqi Government has held elections and has pretended to support human rights in a bid to present an acceptable image of itself. However, the killing of the dissident generals can nullify all these maneuvers.

In same vein, many of Iraq's efforts to contact opposition groups and individuals can be rendered ineffective by the killings. These groups and individuals may in fact become more resolute in their fight against the Iraqi state after learning that the Baghdad regime cannot be trusted.

Iran: Radio Views Killing of Saddam Husayn's Sons-in-Law

LD2402140196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 24 Feb 96

[Station commentary — as heard throughout]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Saddam Husayn's sons-in-law, who had returned to Baghdad with a pledge of pardon from their father-in-law, were killed [on] 23 February. Iraq's news agency says the two brothers, along with their father and other brother, were killed because of family problems.

General Kamil Hasan and his brother had gone to Jordan in August. General Hasan, who had formerly been minister of Iraq's industries and head of military industries organization, in the Jordanian capital of Amman had called for Saddam Husayn's downfall, giving important information on his country's weapons of mass destruction programs to the U.S. and the UN. However, opposition groups in Iraq deserted him due to his cooperation in suppressing the masses and supervision over other countries' military projects. Elsewhere, Saddam Husayn's son-in-law was pushed into isolation after unveiling secret information over the Iraqi regime and playing a mediatory role to draw Jordan closer to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

It might have been for this reason that Kamil Hasan returned to his country on grounds that human rights and economic situations have both improved there. His willingness to return to his homeland, however, met with the surprise of many political experts. For Saddam Husayn had, on various occasions, proven that he shows no hesitation to take revenge on his adversaries. Even those within the ruling party, who posed the slightest of threats to his position, have been removed through different tactics. Due to this, it was widely believed that Husayn Kamil Hasan had gained life assurances for their return to Baghdad. However, his death, along with the death of his father and brothers proved the return a fatal gamble. After working to years in the Iraqi Government's ruling body, he had not come to know his father-in-law. It seems Saddam Husayn's two daughters escaped death by divorcing their spouses.

The death of Saddam Husayn's sons-in-law sparked off U.S. outrage and raises the possibility that the incident could have negative impacts on the lifting of economic sanctions imposed against Iraq. Amid all this, Saddam Husayn's promises for a blanket amnesty and his claims of granting political freedom have been tarnished with the recent incident. Hence, political observers state that Saddam Husayn will maintain his iron grip on power through a policy of terror and intimidation.

Iran: Kurdish Opposition Leader on Death of Saddam's Son-in-Law

LD2502101896 Tehran IRNA in English
0725 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA — President Saddam Husayn by killing his sons-in-law proved to the opponents that he cannot tolerate rebellion and opposition, said Shaykh Adham Barezani in an interview with the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' Sunday.

The leader of the revolutionary Kurdish Hizballah of Iraq further told the paper, "Saddam wanted to prove to the Iraqi people that no one can betray him or abandon his line of thought."

Barezani said that slain Husayn Kamil Hasan and Saddam Kamil Hasan, who had defected to Jordan some six months ago, made a grave mitake by returning to Iraq.

Their decision to return indicates "they were not logical to be capable of carrying out a plan," he added.

The official Iraqi line on the murder of the two defectors was that the two were slain on Friday by their relatives after their wives divorced them and their clan rejected their repentance, ruling that their blood be shed for treason.

"We believe that the regime was responsible," said Barezani rejecting the efforts by some who had tried to make a hero out of the two after defection to Jordan. He stressed that they were accomplice to Saddam's crimes. He added that Saddam during his rule has not even spared his familiy members, let alone Shiite and Sunni Muslims.

According to Barezani, the latest killings will not impact on future developments in Iraq and the determining factor will be unity of the Islamic movements. "Once this unity is established, Saddam cannot remain at the helm for long," he told the paper.

Iran: Tehran Papers, SAIRI Leader View Baghdad Killings

LD2602103496 Tehran IRNA in English
0836 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA — The three English-language dailies Sunday editorialized on Iraqi defectors' murder saying the defection was a blessing for the United States since the U.S. intelligence service succeeded in receiving highly classified data on Iraq's nuclear and military plans. "In a bid to liquidate opponents, the Iraqi president encouraged the two defectors to return home and later shed their blood to further consolidate his rule," 'TEHRAN TIMES' added.

The move is, on the one hand, a warning to the Iraqi people that not a single Iraqi citizen will be spared by Saddam's wrath if it is revealed that he or she is sympathizing with the opposition, it said adding, on the other, the move gets the point across to the Iraqi opposition that it should not be deceived by Saddam Husayn's goodwill gestures.

Irrespective of their ideological stands, the Iraqi opposition groups should close ranks in order to force the ruling Ba'th Party to listen to the voice of the Iraqi people, it suggested and added that referendums and free elections should be held in order to pave the way for a representative democratic system in Iraq.

The article concluded that if the opposition fails to prepare such groundwork, innocent Iraqi people will remain hostages in the hands of a person whose thirst for power prompts him to kill even his own kinsmen in cold blood.

Meanwhile, the SAIRI [Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq] chairman talking to the other English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' noted that such moves by Saddam are in no way new and that he has had similar treatments towards other opposition. He cited the example of martyr Mohammad Taqi Kho'i.

The killing of Husayn Kamil Hasan and Saddam Kamil Hasan was planned and carried out by Saddam Husayn's son, 'Udayy, and his clique, said the ayatollah adding that the news given out that the defectors were killed by the members of their own tribe are baseless and pure fabrication.

"To my mind, the decision for the murder of the two was taken by Saddam, and the prelude to the move was when Saddam's daughters got divorced from Husayn Kamil Hasan and Saddam Hasan," he emphasized.

Ayatollah Hakim described Saddam's government as a notorious regime for retracting its promises. He said the regime does not abide by its commitments, the law, and ethics. He cited two reasons for the recent move of Saddam: deep-rooted differences in Saddam's family and disappointment of Husayn Kamil and his brother with the future of the regime. The ayatollah concluded that the fate of Saddam's sons-in-law should be taken as a good lesson by the others such as the exiled Iraqi opposition members, the Kurds, the neighboring countries with whom Saddam is trying to re-establish normal relations.

Meanwhile, 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' stated that the latest political murders in the long chain of violence encouraged and carried out by Saddam Husayn's regime against its opponents, should serve as the best reminder of the manner in which the Iraqi leadership deals with the opposition, even if they are members of the ruling family. Commenting on key role played by Husayn Kamil Hasan in the tide of violence launched by the Iraqi security apparatus against the people of Karbala' and al-Najaf during their historical uprising in 1991 against the Ba'th Party, it stated, "it was he who engineered the massive and ambitious arms program vigorously pursued by Baghdad in the beginning of 1988, aimed to produce nuclear as well as biological weapons."

Given the fact that Husayn Kamil was aware of the extent of the brutality of the ruling clique and particularly Saddam towards anybody opposing him, it was astonishing how the two senior defectors dared to take the decision to embark on their last journey from Amman to Baghdad. Under the circumstance, 'Udayy, the eldest son of Saddam, who is blamed for much of the deadly climax, appears to have set the stage for the current situation in Iraq, which has unfortunately left the Muslim people to bear the heavy burden of the foolhardiness of Saddam Husayn, it concluded.

Iran: TEHRAN TIMES Urges U.S. To Stop 'Hostile Moves'

LD2402225196 Tehran IRNA in English
1131 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 24, IRNA — The English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' called on the U.S. to stop its hostile moves against Iran and instead try to understand the Islamic Republic. The editorial was commenting on the recent report to the U.S. Senate of John Deutch, director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), who charged Iran with being a major sponsor of terrorism throughout the world and attempting to modernize its armaments and technology to advance weapons of mass destruction.

The paper said these baseless allegations have been so extensively repeated by U.S. officials that they who knowingly spread such accusations have forgotten that they have no foundation.

Turning to U.S. President bill Clinton's failure to convince Russian authorities to stop cooperating with Iran in nuclear projects, it said, "the CIA chief may be suffering from Alzheimer's disease as he has been a witness to the failure of a policy followed by Bill Clinton."

Referring to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's statement a couple of months ago that Iran will accept all U.S. charges on sponsoring terrorism if Washington was able to prove a single case, the editorial said, "despite its inability to do so, the White House has not ceased its nonsensical anti-Iran policy."

The world people are not so naive as to accept everything on face value, stressed the paper, and asked Washington to desist from continuibng its nasty anti-Iran policy.

In conclusison, it recommended that the White House try to understand the strong, sovereign and independent Iranian nation instead of increasing its hostility towards it.

Iran: Koranic Group Returns After Being Released by Croats

LD2602083696 Tehran IRNA in English
0757 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — The Iranian reciters of the holy Quran and members of the quranic choir "Qadr", who had been imprisoned for six days last week by some radical Croats, returned home Monday morning.

Ahmad Liaie [name as received], head of the six-member group, told IRNA that their detention was a premeditated move by Croat extremists.

"All the people on the bus were asked to produce their passports. however, they paid no attention to our passports. Immediately afterwards, we were arrested by several armed men," he said.

He further quoted the commander of the Croat forces as saying that they had arrested the Iranian reciters on the basis of an order issued by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) forces.

Liaei divulged that they were kept in a small and cold room, under very poor conditions.

At the end of the investigation, the Croat forces ascertained that the Iranian quranic group had made the visit to the region only to perform cultural programs, he added.

The Iranians went to Bosnia-Herzegovina at the invitation of the Rais-ul-Ulema of the Bosnian Islamic community on the occasion of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan.

On returning to Zagreb last Tuesday, they were taken into custody by some radical Croats, who later freed them following the mediation of the Iranian Embassies in Sarajevo and Zagreb.

Iran: Jannati Friday Prayers on Elections

LD2302153596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0800 GMT 23 Feb 96

[Second sermon of Friday prayers delivered by Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, member of the Guardians Council, in Tehran — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A large number of people participated in the Jerusalem Day rally. The size of the crowd was so extraordinary that every one was amazed and full of admiration. We owe this to divine favor and the will of God. This is a gift from God. God wishes to demonstrate Islam's glory in these rallies. May God reward you in this world and afterlife for your devotion.

Our enemies are very wicked and try hard to pretend as if only small groups of people attended the rallies. The way the issue was reported abroad made one think that only several thousand or hundreds of thousands of people attended the rally. As for their reporting of the ceremonies abroad, they have said that only a few people sat down inside the Iranian diplomatic mission to talk and drink cups of tea. I do not have any figures on the number of people attending the Jerusalem Day rallies abroad. I tried to obtain some statistics, but no data was available. However, I can tell you that hundreds of countries marked Jerusalem Day. Maybe some of the ceremonies were not as extensively attended as others, but the occasion was marked.

The people abroad showed that they care about Jerusalem Day. These are the people who bear a grudge against America and Israel. These are the people who realize how much Islam and the Muslims have suffered at the hands of the United States and Israel. Jerusalem Day is the day when they can demonstrate their anger and declare their hostility and disavowal against the enemies. On Jerusalem Day, these people declare their loyalty to Islam and the first Qiblah of Muslims. Their loyalty was demonstrated by rallies, prayers, etc. They showed their respect for Imam Khomeyni's message, instructing us to honor Jerusalem Day.

Let the enemies say what they want. They are very wicked indeed. When the American Black preacher Mr. Farrakhan was here — he organized a rally in America [Nation of Islam rally] attended by over a million people — I asked him whether he had heard anything about the Jerusalem Day preparations while he was in the United States. His answer was that Radio America never says anything good about Iran. He said: I did not know much about the Jerusalem Day issues until I came to Iran. Well, it is a good job he came here and saw the occasion for himself.

Anyway, despite the wicked deeds of the enemies, the people demonstrated their support and their presence on the political arenas. We appreciate this and we are grateful. [passage omitted]

Another issue I wish to discuss today is that of the upcoming Islamic Majles elections. I would like to discuss the issue in detail and fortunately we have enough time. First of all, I would like to recommend that the voice and vision and the publicity organs in general should repeatedly broadcast the messages left by the imam [Khomeyni], may God be satisfied with his deeds, in his will and testament. The people would then realize how much importance their great imam attached to the Majles elections. Everyone should feel dutybound to take part in the elections. [passage omitted]

To take part in the Majles elections is a religious duty. When I say a religious duty, our dear listeners must not take it lightly. This is truly a divine political duty. Attending the Friday prayers is also a divine political duty, but taking part in the elections is much more important. The fate of the country is determined by the elections, but missing the Friday prayers for a couple of weeks is not so important. If the number of votes cast is less than the expected figure, the enemy would find a political weapon for its propaganda. They would exploit the figure as evidence that the people are no longer loyal to the revolution. The enemies would then use this weapon like a club to beat us on the head. [passage omitted]

One issue is that of assessing the eligibility of the candidates. That is the business of the the Guardian Council and the executive committees. Let me make a short reference. When candidates register, an executive committee which is mainly composed of the people's trustees — that is, nine individuals who are accepted by the people and trusted by them — assesses the eligibility of the candidates under the supervision of the governor and according to the law. [passage omitted] I have no time now to raise the big shortcomings of the electoral law here. The more we encounter that law, the more we tackle it, and the more faults we find in it. They are mainly in our own working domain.

What I mean to say is that the Guardian Council has to review around 5,000 cases in a very short time. Is that period really enough for the investigations? Forget the Guardian Council; some of our friends, some of our supervisors in Tehran, were saying that they worked around the clock. They said: We created shifts so that the work does not stop, and eventually we managed to get there. And now, it is the same at the Guardian Concil. Work is continuing morning, noon, and night.

They work as long as they can. God willing, the Council will get there.

Anyhow, there are difficulties and shortcomings in the election law which must eventually be eliminated. Something must be done so that candidate registration does not take place for no good reason at all. We have wierd people who have registered as candidates. It is because the door is open and no one can be told not to register. Some one registered who had made many mistakes in a written test. [passage omitted] They really take up a lot of time. How long must the executive committee allocate to that sort of thing in order to say eventually that someone is not elligible? [passage omitted]

There were many diverse reasons for the rejections. One sector had a problem in practical commitment to Islam; another sector had difficulty with practical commitment to the system and the constitution. Another was difficulty with the Guardianship of the Supreme Jurisconsult. Another was affiliations with the grouplets. Sometimes there are addiction problems. [passage omitted] The election supervision authorities take great care as far as possible. Just to let you know, there were times during the Gurardian Council deliberations when we needed to ask a question about someone which was not possible domestically. Someone abroad had the information. Our colleagues phoned that person abroad and made their queries.

This is no joke. If someone gets into the Majles and then it becomes clear that he is connected with the hypocrites [Mojahedin-e Khalqh Organization], or connected with the royalists, the opposition is inspired by them. If someone gets into the Majles who has been invested in by the Americans — and there have been one or two cases like that — what would become of this country? What would they be saying from the Majles podium which belongs to the barefooted and oppressed people? What opportunies would they give to the enemy? These are most important issues. [passage omitted]

In 1362/63 [years beginning 21 March 1983 and 84], when the country was in turmoil and full of problems everywhere, such as the war, someone left the country in order to enjoy himself abroad and make money, etc. Now he has suddenly reappeared over here and registered as a candidate. So how do we know the degree of that person's practical commitment to Islam? How are we to know what he has been up to abroad? How do we know how committed the said person is to the Islamic republic system and its Constitution? Such individuals are certainly not acceptable and they cannot be approved of. It is possible that he may have been hired by others who will train him with a vast array of ploys, pay for him and his campaign, and possibly make him a winner at the ballot boxes. What will a person like this do if he finds his way into the Majles?

You should bear the enemy's mischievous deeds in mind Recently I was informed about a certain incident, which at first made me laugh. However, I was told that the whole this was not a joke and was in fact very serious. They told me that England had sent a girl to Iran to impersonate a Talaba [religious seminary student] boy. She stayed in this country for a while and made friends among the other Talabas. They told me that she did this for about two or three years, and the truth — that she was in fact a girl and a spy — was revealed only after she left Iran.

When such deeds are committed, how can one remain simple-minded enough to allow participation by anyone who has registered his name for the elections? How can one say: Well, we see no problem with this person's candidacy, so here you are, the gates of Majles are open to you. This would be simple-mindedness.

In any case, the process of determining the suitability of candidates is still in progress, and despite all the care taken, no one can claim that there will be no mistakes. There will naturally be faults in any type of work. We have therefore asked all our friends to tell us — by writing or other means — about any information which may prove useful to our work. This is despite the large volume of work before us.

The task of determining the candidates' suitability is going to be finished in a few days time and the results will be announced. We were asked if the names of those approved so far could now be announced. We said no, because the final judgment will be given during the last stage. There would be some problems with announcing some names now. One problem is that they might start their election campaign right now, thereby putting those whose names are announced at a later stage in a disadvantageous position. In other words, some will have more time than others, and this is unfair. [passage omitted]

The other issue is the high cost of election campaigning. People see that money is being wasted, especially by individuals who have certain sources for their funding. People get upset and pessimistic when they see these things. They ask: where does all this money come from?

Some of these expenses are of course natural and within acceptable limits; that is to say that candidates will inevitably have to do some campaigning if they want to get elected, and this will cost money. There is no problem with this. However, too much spending above the accepted boundaries raises questions, especially in relation to individuals who have access to public funds [Beyt ol- Mal]. Of course, it is possible that they might not use these funds and use other sources, but still it would be difficult to explain things to the people, and at least certain suspicions would be created. These must be stopped.

The mere allocation of large budgets and extensive efforts toward election campaigning should not be allowed to win votes. The result of such a trend would be that a person without any money will not get any votes. This is not the way our system works. Should a person who is deprived of everything else also be barred from the Majles, given that he may be a suitable and honest person who meets all the requirements? [passage omitted]

Those brothers and sisters who wish to vote should note the following points: The government is a government of the oppressed; our imam was an imam of the oppressed; the imam's ummah — those who have sacrificed life and limb and children, who were tortured, who were imprisoned, who suffered hardship — they are the oppressed, the sansculottes. As to who should to go to the Majles is partly up to the dear people. All the onus cannot be put on the group responsible for eligibility appraisal. The correct choice is yours, you dear ones. See who is a protector of the oppressed, in deeds not in words. [passage omitted]

Another is the issue of the revolution. We have a problem when reviewing eligibility, which our dear people should know. That is, there are some people who possess the qualifications stated in the law, but their revolutionary fervor is either weak or nonexistent. We cannot reject them. But the people should reject them. [passage omitted]

The Majles representatives should be brave. The remarks made by the esteemed leader on the 'Id al-Fitr and Jerusalem Day were invaluable. They should have courage and should not be afraid. They should not be afraid of America. Some people think that America is so strong and we are so weak that it can easily make our decisions for us. America is not that strong and are we not so weak. [passage omitted] America is rotting from within. It has domestic problems. The black Muslims will be a big problem for America tomorrow. It has other problems with which it is currently grappling. The world is gradually realizing that it is possible not to listen to America. This is because we did not and other countries did not either, in the case of the economic sanctions. [passage omitted]

Another point is simple living. The representatives' homes, cars, way of living, should be simple. If he were to seek luxury he could not defend the concept of simple living. [passage omitted]

Our dear people should be careful to choose correctly. God forbid if anyone refrains from voting for any reason. A person may have a gripe. It is natural. You cannot please all the people. Some gripes are justified and some are uncalled for. But in any case, that should not cause one not to perform one's divine, political, and national duty. Then he should accept its consequences. Both the consequences of not voting and also the consequences of voting for unsuitable people.

As time is running out, my last point is — I don't know how to say this — on the election day neither our dear candidates nor their dear supporters nor others should resort to immoral, un- Islamic, or dishonorable measures in order to gain votes. [passage omitted]

I say to the newspapers: you may write things to increase your sales and readers. Do not count on readership and sales alone. Do not write anything that would cause mischief or make the people despondent or pessimistic, or create tension within society. Some things might be true and some might not be. It would be harmful to say it. Everything that is true cannot be said and must not be said. The benefits and harms of this to the people should be assessed. The greatest harm is moral harm; for instance, to make the people cantankerous, belligerent, suspicious of one another, and of certain people. [passage omitted]

Iran: IRNA Interviews Personalities on Political Trends, Election

LD2402231796 Tehran IRNA in English 2221 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA — On the eve of the fifth parliamentary polls in post-revolution Iran, IRNA carried out a series of interviews with political figures and parties on social justice, national development and the criteria for selection of deputies in order to enlighten the public opinion.

IRNA believes that presentation of the viewpoints of individuals and different political tendencies could help the public to elect their representatives with greater awareness.

Majles Vice-Speaker Hasan Rowhani airing his views on political groupings, told IRNA that presenting a clear-cut definition of the existing inclinations in the country is no easy task. He said that if the small factions or groups functioned under party organizations and specified their positions, their classification would become easier.

Vice-President 'Ata'ollah Mohajerani said in view of the fact that there exists no political party in the country in the strictest sense of the term, the concept of a political group has not been applied properly and is more or less a political tendency.

Mohajerani noted that technocrat in its western sense does not exist in the country and this appellation used by some individuals is unjustifiable.

A Tehran representative in the current Majles, Morteza Nabavi, said that the Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM) [Militant Clergy Association] supports people's political participation, social justice, the government's policies, and relations with other countries on the basis of mutual respect. The JRM is loyal to the guidelines of the founder of the Islamic Republic and his successor Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, and regards the Zionist state of Israel as an illegitimate and usurper entity, he added.

In the opinion of Nabavi there is a "masked group called technocrats" which indulges in publicity stunts in its bid for Majles seats in the belief that the constitution should be amended, armed forces and the judiciary should be placed under the president who should also be empowered to disband the Majles if deemed necessary, thereby restricting the powers of vali-e faqih (supreme juriconsult).

According to Labour Secretary 'Ali Reza Mahjub, it does not seem right to use words such as 'traditional right', 'modern right' or 'technocrats' to name different political groups, since all of them are in line with the Islamic revolution and velayat-e-faqih [guardianship of the jurisconsult]. He said that the criteria of qualifying for the Majles should be commitment to the principle of velayat-e faqih, with roots in the deprived sector of the society.

Presidential advisor, Hasan Ghafuri-Fard said that he hardly believes in such words as "right and left, because these have no meaning in our culture. Our criteria is centred on belief in velayat-e faqih, constructive role of people, struggle against U.S. and countering the cultural invasion." The so-called rightists believe that social justice should be the base of development, while the left wingers maintain that development would lead to social justice. The right believes social justice should never be sacrificed for development, he said. On foreign policy, the right labels the U.S. as the archenemy of the country while the left says a compromise with the U.S. should take shape anyway.

Regarding cultural issues, the right is of the opinion that Islamic countries are target of cultural invasion and should take urgent measures in order to preserve their cultural values.

On economy, the right believes that as long as the deprived sectors exist in the society, official assistance should be provided for them such as subsidie on basic items. In the the field of macroeconomics, the right says the affairs should be handed over to the people as far as possible except those sectors stipulated in the constitution.

Ghafuri-Fard added that perhaps the difference [between] modern and traditional rightists lies in the fact that in economic areas the rightists rely on market economy, but considering the country's circumstance they have realized that market economy cannot singly direct the country, thus turning to technology and industry as well.

On the administrators, he said the only thing which is clear with regard to this group is that they principally bank on reconstruction and development. Excluding this group there are of course several university groups which stress reconstruction and expertise.

Ghafuri-Fard said that none of these groups have adopted and declared a clear position on political, social and cultural issues, and that they cannot therefore be judged properly like the so-called rightists and leftists.

Head of the country's free trade zones, Morteza Alviri, said that during the war and after the ouster of Abolhasan Banisadr (the president who fled Iran in women's clothing). [sentence as received]

He added that a third and moderate or independent group is emerging with undertones on political liberties, social justice and economic growth and development.

Iran: Daily Interviews Deputy Foreign Minister on Human Rights

LD2602112796 Tehran IRNA in English
0959 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — Standards for human rights should take into account religious and cultural differences as it is not possible to evaluate all countries' human rights performance on the basis of a universal scheme, said Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif.

In an interview with the English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' printed Monday, he stressed that one should not examine human rights performance in other countries using a unique formula set forth by a specific culture where certain issues are regarded free but are banned in other countries.

In 1982, Iran proposed that human rights criteria should follow religious and cultural values but Western countries opposed the idea, Zarif further told the daily.

The U.N. sent Maurice Danby Capithorne, its special representative to Iran, Febuary 11-16, to investigate the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic.

Appointed to take the place of former U.N. Envoy Rolando Galindo Pohl, Capithorne held discussions with senior judiciary officials and university law professors, as well as meetings with leaders of opposition groups and the inmates at Tehran's Evin Prison.

The daily reported that before leaving Tehran, the U.N. representative stressed on culture and religion as two important factors defining human rights and called on those studying human rights to take into consideration these two important elements, saying that nations can formulate human rights within the framework of their religion and culture.

Commenting on accusations of Iranian violations of human rights, the deputy foreign minister noted that such allegations stemmed from political considerations.

He added that three reports have been previously submitted to the U.N. Human Rights Commission under Galindo Pohl's name but Iran refuted all three as they were groundless and biased, considering that Galindo Pohl did not prepare these reports himself.

He added that the Islamic Republic does not consider it necessary to waste its time responding to unfounded claims.

Freedom of religion and the approaches to religion, women's role in society, family rights, civil punishment, links between man and the society and sexual freedom are among the topics that could be explored and formulated in accordance with religious and cultural values of every country, Zarif expounded in the interview.

Underlining the importance of the issue in defining human rights concepts, he said the idea is prevailing in all countries that have their own culture and are resisting the onslaught of alien influences.

In contrast, certain pressure groups in Western countries considered this process as detrimental to their vested interests and tried to accuse these states as human rights violators, he noted.

He further stressed that proposals for debate on the discrepancy between the articles of the universal declaration of human rights and the cultural values of certain countries should not be regarded as violations but instead be viewed as proper channels in promoting and enriching the universal rights declaration.

'TEHRAN TIMES' quoted him as saying that countries which are committed to their own cultural values, including China, India, southeast Asian and Latin American countries, as well as religious groups in Europe will be drawing the world's attention to the issue.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto Worried Over Attempt on Life of Kashmir Leader

BK2302112096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has expressed concern over the attempt on the life of Mr. Yasin Malik, leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference in occupied Kashmir by Indian agents. In a message to Mr. Yasin Malik, she hoped that he will continue to keep united to the Kashmiri people. [sentence as heard]. She expressed the confidence that Mr. Yasin Malik's resolve will be further strengthened after the attack of the Indian agents. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said people of Pakistan were solidly behind him and his colleagues in their fight for freedom from the Indian subjugation.

Pakistan: Assassination Bid on Kashmir Leaders Reported

BK2302150396 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, serious anti-India demonstrations were held against Indian troops indiscriminate firing in Hindwara. Kashmir Media Service reports that Indian troops opened fire near a mosque in Hindwara, killing one person and injuring several others. Five more innocent Kashmiris were also martyred by Indian troops in Pulwama, Jammu and Kishtwar. The mojahedin reacted by engaging the Indian troops in a three-hour long exchange of firing, inflicting heavy casualties on the Indian troops. Meanwhile, two German journalists who were present in Islamabad-Anantnag on 'Id al-Fitr day have said they saw the Indian gunman making murderous attempt on the two Liberation Front leaders — Mohammad Yasin Ahmad and Shakeel Ahmad Bakshi. Our correspondent, Ghulam Nabi Khayal, reports that at a press conference by the Indian Government in Srinagar it was disclosed that the gunmen who injured the Liberation Front Chief Yasin Malik was a brigadier of the Indian Army.

[Begin Khayal recording] All Parties Hurriyat Conference has cautioned people of Kashmir against the conspiracy hatched by the Indian Government along with the armed forces to liquidate popular Muslim leadership in the valley. Addressing a press conference in Srinagar Friday, the Hurriyat leaders Syed Ali Gilani, Abdul Ghani Lone, Mawlavi Abbas Ansari, Mohammad Yaqubuddin, and Javed Mir said the government was frustrated because of the ongoing freedom struggle against illegal Indian occupation of the state. They reiterated that the people of Kashmir shall in no case be harassed by such dubious acts. It was disclosed at the press conference that the gunman who injured Liberation Front Chief Yasin Malik and Secretary Shakeel Bakshi in South Kashmir on 'Id al-Fitr was that by by a Brigadier of the Indian Army. [sentence as heard] At a condolence meeting to mourn the death of 85-year old Muslim leader Abdul Ghaffar Chacha, Hurriyat leaders also said that the ruling Congress party in India was a sinking ship and surfacing of a hawala [illegal money transfer case] scandal recently may cause a total set back to this party in the forthcoming elections all over India. Ghulam Nabi Khayal, PTV news, New Delhi, India. [end recording]

Pakistan: Grenade Attack on Kashmiri Leader's House Reported

BK2602120196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, the residence of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference [APHC] leader, Khwaja Abdul Ghani Lone, in Srinagar was attacked with a hand grenade; however, no damage was done as it did not explode. Attacks on the houses of APHC leaders have almost become a routine. Earlier, houses of Syed Ali Gilani and Khwaja Abdul Ghani Lone have been attacked several times, while a murderous attack was made on Mr. Yasin Malik and Shakeel Ahmad Bakhshi on 'Id [al-Fitr] day. They are now under treatment in New Delhi.

Pakistan high commissioner visited Mohammad Yasin Malik and Shakeel Ahmad Bakhshi in the hospital and inquired about their health. He also conveyed to them Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's message wishing them speedy recovery.

The Liberation Front leader, Javed Ahmad Mir, has said the concern expressed internationally over the murderous attacks on Kashmiri leaders had further steeled the resolve of Kashmiris to carry on their struggle to secure their liberation from the Indian bondage. He particularly appreciated the statement of Ms. Benazir Bhutto and the Pakistan Foreign Office reaction and described them as timely, which had further boosted the spirit of the struggling Kashmiris.

Pakistan: Spokesman Comments on Attack on Kashmiri Leaders

BK2302150696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has taken a serious note of the increasing threats to the lives and properties of the leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference in occupied Kashmir. An official spokesman in Islamabad has expressed total solidarity with the Hurriyat Conference for the condemnation of the attack on its leader Yasin Malik on the eve of 'Id al-Fitr. The spokesman said the attack on Yasin Malik and his associate is part of attempts to eliminate the Kashmiri leaders. He added that such acts are in continuation of the brutal techniques of the occupation forces and their agents to suppress the freedom struggle.

Pakistan: Indian Army Brigadier Allegedly Attacked Kashmiri Leader

BK2402101896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The All Parties Hurriyat Conference [APHC] has warned the people of occupied Kashmir against Indian conspiracy to eliminate their leadership. A leader of the APHC, Syed Ali Gilani, told a news conference in New Delhi that the gunman who had seriously injured the Kashmiri leader, Mr. Yasin Malik, on 'Id al-Fitr day is a serving brigadier of the Indian Army. Syed Ali Gilani said that Kashmiris would never be harassed by such dastardly acts.

Leader of the opposition Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif has condemned the attempt on the life of Kashmiri leaders, Mr. Yasin Malik and Shakeel Bakhshi, by Indian agents. In a statement from London, the PML-N [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz group] chief called upon the United Nations, Islamic Conference, and the world community at large to impose economic sanctions against India to press it to allow the right of self-determination to the Kashmiri people. Mr. Nawaz Sharif assured the Kashmiri people that the entire Pakistani nation supports them in their struggle against Indian brutalities.

Pakistan: Spokesman—Indian Forces Shooting Along Control Line

BK2302151396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An ISPR [Inter Service Press Release] spokesman said in Rawalpindi today that the Indian troops resorted to unprovoked firing on Pakistani forces along the Line of Control. He said the clash took place between the troops in the Samba sector yesterday.

It followed when the Indian troops tried to violate the status of the working boundary. He said the exchange of fire took place twice in the same area. However, there has been no casualty on the Pakistani side.

Pakistan: Bhutto Again Offers 'Meaningful Dialogue' With India

BK2402113896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Ms. Benazir Bhutto has again offered to hold bilateral talks with India but said these talks should not be for the sake of talks alone. She was addressing the members of the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs in Karachi today. The prime minister said Pakistan wants a meaningful dialogue with India, which naturally should cover the core issue of Kashmir. She said two years ago Pakistan exchanged nonpapers but both countries rejected each others'. She said Pakistan also attended the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] summit conference to demonstrate a spirit of cooperation. However, no headway could be made toward solving problems between the two countries. The prime minister said India should clearly realize that violence and force in occupied Kashmir could not solve the problem. India should come forward for meaningful dialogue on the issue. She hoped that the confusion which exists in the Indian ruling circles would be removed and Indian leadership would be ready for talks after elections in their country.

Referring to Indian ambitions, Ms. Benazir Bhutto said that New Delhi exploded a nuclear device in 1974. Reports are now surfacing in the intelligence circles which indicate that India is preparing for another nuclear test in the weeks ahead, which certainly cannot be in the interest of peace in the region and the world peace. Later, the prime minister formally inaugurated the country's second awami markaz [community center] in Karachi. It houses a complete shopping mall. The prime minister went around the offices of KESC [Karachi Electric Supply Corporation], Telecommunication Corporation, and Sui Southern Gas Company and inquired about the working of these offices.

Pakistan: Bhutto—Indian Provocations Cannot Intimidate Islamabad

BK2402151596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said Pakistan wants meaningful dialogue with India to solve their problems, which should cover the core issue of Kashmir so as to settle this long-standing dispute. Addressing members of the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs in Karachi today, she said talks for the sake of talks cannot solve the problem. Pakistan and India had exchanged nonpapers two years ago on this issue but could not arrive at any agreement to further the talks. Pakistan's attitude throughout this period has been positive in comparison to that of India. No headway could be made toward solving problems between the two countries due to Indian attitude. The prime minister said India should realize that violence and force in occupied Kashmir could not solve this problem and New Delhi should come forward for meaningful dialogue on the issue. She hoped the confusion which now exists in the Indian ruling cadre would be removed and Indian leadership would be ready for talks with Pakistan after elections in their country.

Referring to Indian ambitions, Ms. Benazir Bhutto said New Delhi exploded a nuclear device in 1974 and there are reports that it is preparing for another nuclear test in the weeks ahead. The Indian prime minister himself has admitted that his country has not abandoned the nuclear option. She said India is pursuing its missiles program, which is threatening the security of not only its neighbors but also the countries in the Middle East. The prime minister said eight times since India exploded a nuclear device, Pakistan has made specific proposals on the question of nuclear nonproliferation but each time these were rejected by the Indian Government. Ms. Benazir Bhutto said India has interfered in each of its neighbors from Bangladesh to Nepal. These developments have put enormous pressure on Pakistan. She declared that Pakistan would not be intimidated by India's provocative acts. Let the world know that it is India which is talking of a nuclear test and experimenting deadly missiles. The prime minister said Pakistan has no nuclear ambitions and its atomic programs are peaceful. She vehemently denied that Pakistan has acquired atomic weapon technology from China.

Replying to various questions, the prime minister said we want peace in Karachi and initiated political dialogue despite terrorism for want of political solution to the problem. [sentence as heard]. Replying to a question about tax reforms policy, the prime minister said that we are trying to reduce direct taxes and increase indirect taxes.

Later, the prime minister formally inaugurated the country's second awami markaz [community center] in Karachi. It houses a complete shopping mall. [passage omitted]

Pakistan: Spokesman—Ali's Statement on Kashmir, Israel Misquoted

BK2502092196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Foreign Office spokesman has said that there has been a blatant distortion of the foreign minister's [Asif Ahmad Ali] speech and conversation at Houston in the United States, particularly with regard to Kashmir and Israel. The spokesman said in Islamabad yesterday that the foreign minister had stated that the Kashmiri people have the right to decide in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions whether they wish to join India or Pakistan. The foreign minister had not mentioned any other option, the spokesman added. The foreign minister had also been misquoted as regards Israel, on which he had spoken only of the general view expressed by a number of countries.

Pakistan: Defense Minister Sees No Immediate Threat of War From India

BK2502093696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani has said that Pakistan wants to resolve the Kashmir issue peacefully in accordance with UN resolutions. In an interview with PAKISTAN PRESS INTERNATIONAL in Karachi, he said Pakistan believes in the peaceful resolution of all its disputes with India. He said Pakistan has appealed repeatedly to the international community to ensure that India does not carry out another nuclear test.

Mirani said Pakistan does not face any immediate threat of war from India. In response to a question, he said there is no truth in U.S. reports regarding the supply of ring magnets to Pakistan by China.

Pakistan: Editorial Says CIA Chief's 'Agenda' To Punish Islamabad

BK2502111896 Islamabad THE NATION in English 25 Feb 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Nuclear Policy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE campaign in the US to block the transfer to Pakistan of the paid-for equipment cleared as a result of the Brown Amendment, and the imposition of sanctions on both China and Pakistan for the alleged supply of nuclear weapons-related technology, refuses to die out. It has been kept alive through a concerted effort in the US media as well as by the intelligence community, particularly the CIA, which is not only believed to be behind the planted stories that have appeared, its Director, John Deutch, has testified before Congress that there was not much ambiguity about the information gathered by his agency and provided to the US administration on the so-called ring magnets affair. Administration spokesman, including the Secretary of State Warren Christopher, however, have been at pains to deny any "determination" has so far been made, or is likely to be made in the near future, about whether any sanctions are called for. The CIA Director did also say that India might conduct another nuclear explosion which may trigger off a Pakistani explosion and raise tension in the Subcontinent to a point where conflict between Pakistan and India may be on the cards, which has the potential of escalating into a nuclear exchange.

Had the CIA chief not been on what is obviously emerging as an "inspired" agenda to find some excuse to punish Pakistan and China, he should have reflected on the implications of his statement, which clearly brought out that nuclear proliferation was begun in the region by India exploding a device in 1974. Everything that has happened subsequently flows from that fateful initial decision by New Delhi, which continues to defy the anti-nuclear weapon international sentiment in its blind ambition to become a regional and world power.

Although the prospects of President Clinton or the US administration acting on the planted stories in the American media in a Presidential election year are remote, since they would hurt American commercial interests in China worth $10 billion, Pakistan has fallen prey once more to the lobby which has made a career out of pillory us to the exclusion of the real culprit responsible for the nuclear and missile race in South Asia. Senator Pressler of the infamous Amendment that bears his name has risen from the dead and is trying to pressurise the US administration to halt the transfer of the Brown Amendment-cleared equipment worth $368 million, while imposing sanctions against Pakistan and China. It is unlikely the indefatigable Senator will be able to raise the kind of support for his views which in a different time and circumstances he managed for his Amendment (considered a "compromise" at the time but which ended up only "compromising" Pakistan's interests).

But although Islamabad may not be too concerned about the hullabaloo surrounding the campaign, it does pose new and troubling questions for our policy makers what attitude to take on issues such as the forthcoming Complete Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Fissile Materials Production Cut off Convention. Our position so far has been that we will not unilaterally sign the CTBT unless India does so. But we could be faced hypothetically with a situation that India explodes the second device and later agrees to sign the CTBT, having negotiated its status as a nuclear armed power.

What options will be open to Pakistan then, and what contingency planning Islamabad has done, will become crucial to safeguarding the country's security.

Pakistan: Spokesman Reaffirms Commitment to Nuclear Nonproliferation

BK2602054496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0500 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has again reiterated its firm resolve to promote nuclear nonproliferation and made it clear that it neither possessed a nuclear bomb nor intended to make one. In a letter published in the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH of London, a spokesman of the Pakistan High Commission said: Pakistan had reached a level of know-how, which enables it to assemble a device but it would not do so. He further said Pakistan is ready to sign the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty] only if India did the same.

The spokesman regretted the development and deployment along Pakistan's border of a recently tested nuclear-capable missiles by India and said Pakistan had taken steps to protect itself against an unfriendly neighbor. The spokesman said the hub of the problem is Kashmir and India's persistent refusal to give Kashmiris the right of self-determination as promised by the UN and by India itself. He said resolution of this problem could help normalize the situation of security in South Asia.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: LTTE Reportedly Threatens To Attack Foreign Missions

BK2502130896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Ellalan Force, widely believed to be a wing of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], has reportedly threatened to attack the Japanese and Malaysian missions in Colombo. The two embassies have been targeted for different reasons. However, it is now clear that the LTTE plans to direct its campaign of terror toward foreign missions in Colombo as international pressure mounts against them. The Japanese Embassy has been warned not to issue a visa to Tamil United Liberation Front MP Neelam Thiruchelvam. Mr. Thiruchelvam is due to visit Japan for a seminar. The embassy's first secretary, E. Suzuki, says, however, that the MP has not yet applied for a visa. Two deputy inspector generals of police have been assigned to protect the embassy and inquire into the matter.

The Malaysian High Commission, on the other hand, was threatened after the Kuala Lumpur government announced a crackdown on the LTTE. Malaysia said last week that it would revoke the permanent resident status of foreigners taking part in pro-LTTE activities. Malaysia is the first country to announce such a harsh crackdown on the terrorists.

The LTTE is known to have an extensive network of offices in both Asia and Europe. It receives substantial financial and political support from Sri Lankan expatriates. Observers believe that the European Union is likely to be the next target of the Ellalan Force. The EU issued a strong statement recently condemning the central bank bomb attack and terrorist activities conducted by the Tigers.

Sri Lanka: Missions Promised Extra Security in Wake of LTTE Threats

BK2602121896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] All foreign missions in Sri Lanka have been provided with extra security under the prevailing situation in the country. If a special request is made by foreign mission for additional security, the police department will consider it and take steps to provide more security after appraising the security situation of any particular mission, said DIG [Deputy Inspector General] Colombo D.N.T.B. Dissanayke. Inquired by the SLBC whether any embassy or a high commission in Colombo had lodged a complaint with the police on an alleged threat by a terrorist group, Mr. Dissanayake said that no complaint had been lodged up to yesterday.

Meanwhile, a highly placed source from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told the SLBC that the ministry had not been informed of such a threat by any particular mission, but confirmed that Colombo- based foreign missions are getting some threatening messages from LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] front organizations. This is a clear indication that the LTTE is under pressure from the international community for inhumane atrocities committed in their respective countries.

Countries friendly toward Sri Lanka in the Asian region and in Europe have taken a very strong attitude of the LTTE activities on their soil and have pledged to Sri Lanka that measures will be taken to curb activities, including fund raising, on their soil. The source also confirmed that the security forces and the police will take immediate steps to provide extra security if and when required. There are 35 foreign missions in Colombo.

Sri Lanka: Security Forces Kill 6 LTTE 'Terrorists' in Trincomalee

BK2402111496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Six LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists were killed in a security forces ambush at Kuchchaveli in the Trincomalee district yesterday. The Tigers had been transporting food in a tractor when they were attacked by the troops. The security forces suffered no casualties. The operational headquarters of the Defense Ministry says that arms, ammunition, communication equipment, and stocks of food were recovered by troops.